



# Exemplar Grade 4 Reading Test Questions



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# Introduction

This booklet explains ACT<sup>®</sup> Aspire<sup>®</sup> Grade 4 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 4 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: “The Cutest Ugly Bird”

### The Cutest Ugly Bird

- 1 First thing in the morning, I logged into my favorite computer game. As my on-screen character ran up a mountain path and hid from dragons, I almost forgot I had to go to school. Then Mom called upstairs to say I had to leave *right now*. The dragon’s treasure would have to wait.
- 2 When I arrived, everyone was gathered around the class computer staring at a big white egg in a small enclosure. I frowned as a large bald bird waddled onto the screen.
- 3 Mr. Larimar had shared the online video feed of a California condor’s nest with us the day before. Santiago’s eyes lit up when he heard that we would watch a rare bird hatch. Maggie asked if it would have fluffy feathers. Deepa wondered what the bird would eat. The egg was supposed to hatch this week. But watching awkward birds and a single egg seemed boring compared to the adventures in my game.
- 4 I found Mr. Larimar working on an egg watch schedule.
- 5 “Do we all have to watch the egg?” I asked.
- 6 “Well, Matt, I can leave you off the list,” Mr. Larimar said, looking surprised.
- 7 I made the victory sign that my character does when he finds a treasure and took my seat, right next to the class computer. Two bald birds wandered in and out of the camera’s view before class started, but the egg just sat there.
- 8 That afternoon, something on the computer screen twitched. Had I imagined the movement? I sneaked a look just in time to see the egg rock. A thin crack appeared in the shell. Suddenly, a tiny beak poked through the crack.
- 9 “Mr. Larimar! It’s hatching!” I cried.
- 10 With Mr. Larimar’s permission, the class surged over to watch. On screen, a tiny puff of feathers stuck out from the shell. As the nestling raised its head and blinked at the camera, I gasped. This was a bigger surprise than anything in a computer game, and the condor chick was the cutest ugly bird that I had ever seen.

## Question 1

**The Cutest Ugly Bird**

looking surprised.

I made the victory sign that my character does when he finds a treasure and took my seat, right next to the class computer.

Two bald birds wandered in and out of the camera's view before class started, but the egg just sat there.

That afternoon, something on the computer screen twitched. Had I imagined the movement? I sneaked a look just in time to see the egg rock. A thin crack appeared in the shell. Suddenly, a tiny beak poked through the crack.

"Mr. Larimar! It's hatching!" I cried.

With Mr. Larimar's permission, the class surged over to watch. On screen, a tiny puff of feathers stuck out from the shell. As the nestling raised its head and blinked at the camera, I gasped. This was a bigger surprise than anything in a computer game, and the condor chick was the cutest ugly bird that I had ever seen.

Why does Matt make the victory sign in the highlighted line?

- A. The character in his computer game has found a treasure.
- B. Mr. Larimar assigns him a seat next to the class computer.
- C. He learns that he does not have to participate in watching the egg.
- D. He has arrived on time for class.

Sequence	Grade	Question type	DOK level	Reporting category	Correct response
1	4	Selected response	2	Key Ideas and Details	C

This selected-response question requires students to understand a cause-and-effect relationship (aligns with the Common Core State Standards College and Career Readiness anchor standard [CCRA] R.3). To answer the question, students must carefully read the passage and identify the correct reason Matt makes the victory sign in the passage.

**Correct Response**

Only answer option C identifies a reason supported by the passage that Matt makes the victory sign ("He learns that he does not have to participate in watching the egg"). All other answer options are not supported by the passage as causes for Matt's action.

**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	4	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. Work on identifying main ideas/themes and on recognizing sequences and relationships (comparative, cause/effect).

## Question 2

## The Cutest Ugly Bird

Mr. Larimar had shared the online video feed of a California condor's nest with us the day before. **Santiago's eyes lit up** when he heard that we would watch a rare bird hatch. Maggie asked if it would have fluffy feathers. Deepa wondered what the bird would eat. The egg was supposed to hatch this week. But watching awkward birds and a single egg seemed boring compared to the adventures in my game.

I found Mr. Larimar working on an egg watch schedule.

"Do we all have to watch the egg?" I asked.

"Well, Matt, I can leave you off the list," Mr. Larimar said, looking surprised.

I made the victory sign that my character does when he finds a treasure and took my seat, right next to the class computer.

Two bald birds wandered in and out of the camera's view before class started, but the egg just sat there.

That afternoon, something on the computer screen twitched. Had I imagined the movement? I sneaked a look just in time to

What does the highlighted phrase "Santiago's eyes lit up" most nearly mean in the passage?

- A. His eyes expressed how surprised he was at the large size of the condors.
- B. His eyes expressed how excited he was about the egg-watching activity.
- C. He opened his eyes wider to get a better view of the computer.
- D. He opened and closed his eyes rapidly.

Sequence	Grade	Question type	DOK level	Reporting category	Correct response
2	4	Selected response	3	Craft and Structure	B

This selected-response question requires students to determine the figurative meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text (aligns with CCRA R.4). To answer the question, students must carefully read the entire sentence containing the highlighted phrase and determine the meaning of the highlighted phrase in the context of the passage.

### Correct Response

Only answer option B accurately describes the meaning of the highlighted phrase in the context of the passage ("His eyes expressed how excited he was about the egg-watching activity"). The other answer options provide literal or figurative meanings of the phrase that do not correspond with its meaning in the context 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	4	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 3

**The Cutest Ugly Bird**

First thing in the morning, I logged into my favorite computer game. As my on-screen character ran up a mountain path and hid from dragons, I almost forgot I had to go to school. Then Mom called upstairs to say I had to leave *right now*. The dragon's treasure would have to wait.

When I arrived, everyone was gathered around the class computer staring at a big white egg in a small enclosure. I frowned as a large bald bird waddled onto the screen.

Mr. Larimar had shared the online video feed of a California condor's nest with us the day before. Santiago's eyes lit up when he heard that we would watch a rare bird hatch. Maggie asked if it would have fluffy feathers. Deepa wondered what the bird would eat. The egg was supposed to hatch this week. But watching awkward birds and a single egg seemed boring compared to the adventures in my game.

I found Mr. Larimar working on an egg watch schedule.

Think about the passage "The Cutest Ugly Bird" as you read the following selection.

**Aiming High**

It was a hot summer afternoon in Amala's new neighborhood, and only the bounce of a basketball broke the quiet. Curious, Amala looked out her window.

Down the street, a group of older kids stood under a basketball hoop and divided into teams. Amala felt a little sad. She had played on the lacrosse team at her old school, but her new school didn't offer the sport. As she watched the players guard, dodge, and jump for the basket, though, her excitement quickly grew. Many skills she'd learned in lacrosse were used in basketball, too.

Suddenly, she knew how she would spend the rest of the

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

**Part A**

Both Matt and Amala have a favorite activity but have the chance to try a new activity. Explain how Matt's opinion about watching the condor nest is different from Amala's opinion about playing basketball.

600

**Part B**

Give one detail from the passage "The Cutest Ugly Bird" to support your answer to Part A.

600

**Part C**

Give one detail from the selection "Aiming High" to support your answer to Part A.

600



Sequence	Grade	Question type	DOK level	Reporting category	Correct response
3	4	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 two main characters differ in their responses to the chance to take part in new activities. Students must read both the passage and the selection carefully and determine Matt's and Amala's opinions on participating in new activities. Students must then construct a written response identifying a difference between the two characters' opinions, 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	4	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 Matt's opinion about watching the condor nest is different from Amala's opinion about playing basketball (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**

Both Matt and Amala have a favorite activity but have the chance to try a new activity. Explain how Matt’s opinion about watching the condor nest is different from Amala’s opinion about playing basketball.

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Matt doesn’t want to try a new thing, but Amala is okay with trying something new.

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**Part B**

Give one detail from the passage “**The Cutest Ugly Bird**” to support your answer to Part A.

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Matt doesn’t want to do the bird egg activity with his class. It says “watching awkward birds and a single egg seemed boring compared to the adventures in my game.”

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**Part C**

Give one detail from the selection “**Aiming High**” to support your answer to Part A.

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She watches a basketball game and decides to practice on her own.

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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 “The Cutest Ugly Bird” is offered in Part B.
  - An acceptable piece of evidence from the selection “Aiming High” is offered in Part C.
-

**Sample Student Response—Score Point 2****Part A**

Both Matt and Amala have a favorite activity but have the chance to try a new activity. Explain how Matt’s opinion about watching the condor nest is different from Amala’s opinion about playing basketball.

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Matt doesn’t want to watch the nest with his classmates at first, but later he does it. Amala gets interested in basketball right away.

---

**Part B**

Give one detail from the passage “**The Cutest Ugly Bird**” to support your answer to Part A.

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Matt doesn’t want to sign up to watch the nest, but he gets interested when the bird starts to hatch.

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**Part C**

Give one detail from the selection “**Aiming High**” to support your answer to Part A.

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Amala played lacrosse at her old school, but the kids here play basketball.

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**Scoring Rationale**

- 
- 2** This response earns Score Point 2.
- An acceptable claim is offered in Part A.
  - An acceptable piece of evidence from the passage “The Cutest Ugly Bird” is offered in Part B.
  - This response does not receive credit for Part C because it does not identify evidence to support the claim that Amala’s interest about basketball developed quickly.
  - 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 “Aiming High” is offered in Part C.
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**Sample Student Response—Score Point 1****Part A**

Both Matt and Amala have a favorite activity but have the chance to try a new activity. Explain how Matt’s opinion about watching the condor nest is different from Amala’s opinion about playing basketball.

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Amala is someone who likes to try new things right away.

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**Part B**

Give one detail from the passage “**The Cutest Ugly Bird**” to support your answer to Part A.

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Matt is glad about the egg. It says his “eyes lit up when he heard that we would watch a rare bird hatch.”

---

**Part C**

Give one detail from the selection “**Aiming High**” to support your answer to Part A.

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Amala sees kids playing basketball and feels confident that she can play, too.

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**Scoring Rationale**

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- 1 This response earns Score Point 1.
- An acceptable piece of evidence from the selection “Aiming High” is offered in Part C.
  - This response does not earn credit for Part A because it is a partial claim; it addresses only Amala’s response to a new activity.
  - This response does not earn credit for Part B because it is inaccurate; it confuses the narrator, Matt, who is unenthusiastic about watching the egg hatch, with another student, Santiago, who is enthusiastic about watching the egg hatch.
  - 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 “The Cutest Ugly Bird” is offered in Part B.
-

**Sample Student Response—Score Point 0****Part A**

Both Matt and Amala have a favorite activity but have the chance to try a new activity. Explain how Matt’s opinion about watching the condor nest is different from Amala’s opinion about playing basketball.

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They both like activities that are exciting.

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**Part B**

Give one detail from the passage “**The Cutest Ugly Bird**” to support your answer to Part A.

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He was late for school because he was excited about his computer game.

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**Part C**

Give one detail from the selection “**Aiming High**” to support your answer to Part A.

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She likes to watch basketball because she can’t play it anymore.

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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 addresses a claim of similarity rather than a claim of difference.
  - This response does not earn credit for Part B because it discusses Matt’s reaction to his favorite activity, playing his computer game, rather than his reaction to watching the condor nest.
  - This response does not earn credit for Part C because the information given is inaccurate.
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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.
-