



Exemplar Grade 6 Reading Test Questions



discoveractaspire.org

Introduction

This booklet explains ACT[®] Aspire[®] Grade 6 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,¹ 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 6 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.

¹ 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 House of Tunes”

The House of Tunes

LITERARY NARRATIVE: This passage is an original work of fiction.

Ava sighed and looked out the window at the unfamiliar street. Everything was covered in concrete, so different from the trees and rolling hills of her old home. School hadn't started yet, and Ava didn't know anyone. Her eyes fell on the kitchen table, where she'd left her list of places she might like to visit in New York. Next to it was a flier with a note from her mom: “A lady in our building teaches guitar lessons. If you are interested, I will give her a call.”

Ava recognized her mom's good intentions. She would like to play music again. But she still felt at loose ends in the family's apartment in Brooklyn. All Ava's life, the family had lived in Tennessee, where her friends still lived. Then Ava's dad had accepted a job transfer to New York. Now she felt alone in one of the world's largest cities.

At that moment, through the floorboards, Ava heard a mysterious music. It began softly, a low, steady strumming. Then, higher and ringing, a beautiful melody plucked on strings.

Ava's eyes caught the flier for guitar lessons. How long would it take someone to learn to play so well?

Maybe she would take her mom's offer.

Later that week, Martina Solecki ushered her guests into her tidy apartment. “I am so pleased you are interested in lessons, Ava. Come in.”

Ava scanned the cozy living room, noticing many framed photographs arranged on the walls, sheet music neatly stacked, and a guitar propped against an oversized chair.

“Your mother tells me you have just moved to the city,” Ms. Solecki said.

Ava nodded. “I heard someone playing the day we moved in.”

Ms. Solecki laughed, and the laugh sounded to Ava like a guitar briefly strummed. “Maybe you heard me. I often sit on the balcony when I play. I moved into this building fifty years ago, when I arrived from Poland with my family.”

Ava thought about how she had felt living seven hundred miles away from her friends. She tried to imagine how Ms. Solecki must have felt being separated from hers by the entire Atlantic Ocean.

Ms. Solecki had not even spoken the same language as the people she met in the building, she explained to Ava. “But after all,” she said extravagantly, as if quoting someone famous, “music is the universal language.” Her parents had been musical: her father had been a violinist with the symphony, and her mother had played piano in jazz bands. She said that many residents in the building had also been professional musicians. “The building even has a famous nickname—*The House of Tunes*.”

Ava was hooked. She couldn't wait to write to her friends about living in a building with a name. And if so many people had learned to play well, surrounded by other musicians, maybe she could learn, too. The music would seep into her, embrace her.

“When do lessons begin?” Ava asked enthusiastically.

“Next week. Three other students from our building are signed up as well. I will contact them to see if we can get all of you acquainted,” Ms. Solecki said.

Excitement washed over Ava. Life in The House of Tunes was sure to be interesting and hopefully harmonious as well.

Question 1

The House of Tunes

LITERARY NARRATIVE: This passage is an original work of fiction.

Ava sighed and looked out the window at the unfamiliar street. Everything was covered in concrete, so different from the trees and rolling hills of her old home. School hadn't started yet, and Ava didn't know anyone. Her eyes fell on the kitchen table, where she'd left her list of places she might like to visit in New York. Next to it was a flier with a note from her mom: "A lady in our building teaches guitar lessons. If you are interested, I will give her a call."

Ava recognized her mom's good intentions. She would like to play music again. But she still felt at loose ends in the family's apartment in Brooklyn. All Ava's life, the family had lived in Tennessee, where her friends still lived. Then Ava's dad had accepted a job transfer to New York. Now she felt alone in one of the world's largest cities.

At that moment, through the floorboards, Ava heard a mysterious music. It began softly, a low, steady strumming. Then, higher and ringing, a beautiful melody plucked on

What evidence does the author present in the passage to show that Ava is making an effort to get used to her new home? Select all that apply.

- A. Ava looks out the window at the street.
- B. Ava has made a list of places to visit in New York.
- C. Ava is looking forward to when her new school starts.
- D. Ava notices Ms. Solecki's tidy apartment.
- E. Ava decides to ask her mom about taking guitar lessons.

Sequence	Grade	Question type	DOK level	Reporting category	Correct responses
1	6	Technology enhanced	3	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	B, E

This technology-enhanced question requires students to evaluate the specific claims and evidence in a text (aligns with the Common Core State Standards College and Career Readiness anchor standard [CCRA] R.8). To answer the question, students must read the entire passage carefully, then determine which answer option or options provide evidence for the idea that Ava is making an effort to get used to her new home.

Correct Response

Only answer options B and E provide evidence for the stated claim ("Ava has made a list of places to visit in New York" and "Ava decides to ask her mom about taking guitar lessons"). Answer option C is not supported by the passage; answer options A and D may show that Ava is not yet familiar with her new home, but do not serve as evidence that Ava is making an effort to get used to her new home.

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	6	As you read, consider how authors present their arguments. Also read multiple texts with similar topics or similar themes and look for connections between and among these texts.	Read as many above grade-level texts as you can, especially informational texts. Think about how authors construct arguments and support claims. Also, look for connections between and among related texts.

Question 2

The House of Tunes

LITERARY NARRATIVE: This passage is an original work of fiction.

ago, when I arrived from Poland with my family.

Ava thought about how she had felt living seven hundred miles away from her friends. She tried to imagine how Ms. Solecki must have felt being separated from hers by the entire Atlantic Ocean.

Ms. Solecki had not even spoken the same language as the people she met in the building, she explained to Ava. "But after all," she said extravagantly, as if quoting someone famous, "music is the universal language." Her parents had been musical: her father had been a violinist with the symphony, and her mother had played piano in jazz bands. She said that many residents in the building had also been professional musicians. "The building even has a famous nickname—*The House of Tunes*."

Ava was hooked. She couldn't wait to write to her friends about living in a building with a name. And if so many people had learned to play well, surrounded by other musicians, maybe she could learn, too. The music would seep into her, embrace

What is the main purpose of the highlighted paragraph?

- A. To indicate that Ava has moved many other times in her life
- B. To describe how long it took Ms. Solecki to journey across the Atlantic Ocean
- C. To reveal that Ava wishes she could live overseas like Ms. Solecki
- D. To show that Ava can relate to Ms. Solecki's feelings about moving to a new place

Sequence	Grade	Question type	DOK level	Reporting category	Correct response
2	6	Selected response	3	Craft and Structure	D

This selected-response question requires students to analyze the rhetorical role of a paragraph (aligns with CCRA R.5). To answer the question, students must read the entire highlighted paragraph 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 highlighted paragraph ("To show that Ava can relate to Ms. Solecki's feelings about moving to a new place"). The other answer options reference information from the paragraph, but all present misreadings of the purpose of the information.

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	6	As you read, consider the purpose of texts and parts of texts, how texts are structured, how authors use point of view, how context helps determine word meanings, and how authors use words and phrases.	Read as many above grade-level texts as you can, especially informational texts. Analyze how texts are organized, how authors use point of view, and how authors use words and phrases.

Question 3

The House of Tunes

LITERARY NARRATIVE: This passage is an original work of fiction.

Ava sighed and looked out the window at the unfamiliar street. Everything was covered in concrete, so different from the trees and rolling hills of her old home. School hadn't started yet, and Ava didn't know anyone. Her eyes fell on the kitchen table, where she'd left her list of places she might like to visit in New York. Next to it was a flier with a note from her mom: "A lady in our building teaches guitar lessons. If you are interested, I will give her a call."

Ava recognized her mom's good intentions. She would like to play music again. But she still felt at loose ends in the family's apartment in Brooklyn. All Ava's life, the family had lived in Tennessee, where her friends still lived. Then Ava's dad had accepted a job transfer to New York. Now she felt alone in one of the world's largest cities.

At that moment, through the floorboards, Ava heard a mysterious music. It began softly, a low, steady strumming. Then, higher and ringing, a beautiful melody plucked on

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

Part A

The passage describes two characters, Ava and Ms. Solecki, who live in an apartment building in New York. Name one way in which Ava and Ms. Solecki are similar.

600

Part B

Give one detail from the passage to support your answer to Part A.

600

Part C

Give a second detail from the passage to support your answer to Part A.

600

Sequence	Grade	Question type	DOK level	Reporting category	Correct response
3	6	Constructed response	2	Key Ideas and Details	See sample student responses.

This constructed-response task requires students to compare two characters (aligns with CCRA R.3). Specifically, this task requires students to determine one way that Ava and Ms. Solecki are similar. Students must read the passage carefully, then construct a written response that compares Ava and Ms. Solecki, offering examples from the text that demonstrate a similarity between the two characters.

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	6	Read as many grade-level texts as you can, focusing on informational texts. Work on reading closely, determining main ideas/themes, and identifying sequences and relationships (comparative, cause/effect).	Read as many above grade-level texts as you can, especially informational texts. Work on making reasonable conclusions and on identifying and inferring main ideas, themes, sequences, and relationships.

Scoring Framework

Claim	Evidence
An interpretive statement that names one way Ava and Ms. Solecki are similar (1 point)	A detail from the passage that supports the claim (1 point)
	A detail from the passage that supports the claim (1 point)

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

The passage describes two characters, Ava and Ms. Solecki, who live in an apartment building in New York. Describe one way in which Ava and Ms. Solecki are similar.

Ava and Ms. Solecki both enjoy music.

Part B

Give one detail from the passage to support your answer to Part A.

Ava “enthusiastically” asked about when guitar lessons could start.

Part C

Give a second detail from the passage to support your answer to Part A.

Ms. Solecki has played guitar and taught guitar lessons for many years.

Scoring Rationale

- 3** This response earns Score Point 3.
- An acceptable claim is offered in Part A.
 - An acceptable piece of evidence is offered in Part B.
 - An acceptable piece of evidence is offered in Part C.
-

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

The passage describes two characters, Ava and Ms. Solecki, who live in an apartment building in New York. Describe one way in which Ava and Ms. Solecki are similar.

Both of them had to move a long distance.

Part B

Give one detail from the passage to support your answer to Part A.

Ava and her family had to move to New York from Tennessee.

Part C

Give a second detail from the passage to support your answer to Part A.

Ms. Solecki's parents are musicians in Poland.

Scoring Rationale

- 2** This response earns Score Point 2.
- An acceptable claim is offered in Part A.
 - An acceptable piece of evidence is offered in Part B.
 - This response does not earn credit for Part C because it does not address that Ms. Solecki (with her family) moved from Poland to the United States.
 - 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 passage is offered in Part C.
-

Sample Student Response—Score Point 1**Part A**

The passage describes two characters, Ava and Ms. Solecki, who live in an apartment building in New York. Describe one way in which Ava and Ms. Solecki are similar.

Both of them know how to do things.

Part B

Give one detail from the passage to support your answer to Part A.

Ava makes a list of places to go in New York.

Part C

Give a second detail from the passage to support your answer to Part A.

Ms. Solecki teaches guitar lessons.

Scoring Rationale

- 1 This response earns Score Point 1.
- An acceptable piece of evidence is offered in Part C.
 - This response does not earn credit for Part A because it is insufficient; the claim is vague.
 - This response does not earn credit for Part B because it is insufficient; it is not clear how this detail demonstrates a similarity between Ava and Ms. Solecki.
 - 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 is offered in Part B.
-

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

The passage describes two characters, Ava and Ms. Solecki, who live in an apartment building in New York. Describe one way in which Ava and Ms. Solecki are similar.

They live in the same place.

Part B

Give one detail from the passage to support your answer to Part A.

Ava's family moved there from Tennessee.

Part C

Give a second detail from the passage to support your answer to Part A.

Ms. Solecki has lived there a long time.

Scoring Rationale

- 0** This response earns Score Point 0.
- This response does not earn credit for Part A because it is not an interpretive statement based on evidence from the text (see Scoring Guideline i); it is a restatement of information in the prompt.
 - This response does not earn credit for Part B because it does not address a similarity other than the one already provided in the prompt.
 - This response does not earn credit for Part C because it does not address a similarity other than the one already provided in the prompt.
-

Scoring Guidelines

- 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.
-