

Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test

Item Specifications

for

Reading

Grade 6



Dr. Joseph B. Morton
State Superintendent of Education
Alabama State Department of Education
Montgomery, Alabama
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ARMT GRADE 6 READING

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ARMT GRADE 6 READING

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 item types 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.

Content Standard	A statement of what students should know and be able to do by the end of the academic year
Item Type	Multiple-choice items, open-ended items
Additional Information	Further information about the test items for the content standard
Sample Items	A collection of item types for each content standard
Answer Key	Answers for multiple-choice items
Scoring Rubrics for Open-Ended Items	Scoring guide for open-ended items

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.

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CONTENT STANDARDS Grade 6

CONTENT STANDARD	POINTS POSSIBLE
1 – Apply strategies, including making complex predictions, interpreting characters’ behaviors, and comparing and contrasting, to comprehend sixth-grade literary/recreational materials. Examples: complex predictions – order of events, potential conflicts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying supporting details • Using context clues • Identifying sequence of events • Making generalizations 	17
2 – Interpret literary elements and devices, including implied main idea, conflict, and personification. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the climax 	14
3 – Apply strategies that include making complex predictions, identifying the likely source of a text, and comparing and contrasting to comprehend sixth-grade textual/informational and functional materials. Examples: complex predictions – results of actions, expected learning from a chapter or unit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing conclusions • Making generalizations • Using context clues • Identifying sequence of events • Previewing text features, such as headings, before reading 	15
4 – Recognize the use of text elements, including implied main idea, explicit cause-effect relationships, and persuasive techniques, in sixth-grade textual/functional materials. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details related to main idea 	15
TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE	61

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.

The Bird

“Come back, Butch!” shouted Tom as he scrambled after the brown terrier. “You’re not dry yet!”

The dog raced across the field behind Tom’s house, heading for some pine trees. Butch was not fond of his weekly bath and tried to escape at every opportunity.

“If he gets into the woods, he’ll need another bath,” mumbled Tom. “I wish Molly were here to help.”

Just then, a girl rushed up. “Did he take off again?”

Turning to find his friend Molly, Tom replied, “Yes, and he’s probably already rolling in dirt. We need to bring him back.”

As the two friends headed for the trees on the far side of the field, they heard Butch barking.

“Butch doesn’t usually bark unless there’s trouble,” said Tom. Molly and Tom hurried. They found Butch barking furiously at a small bird on the ground. It flapped one wing rapidly in a desperate attempt to fly away while it held the other wing close to its side.

Tom grabbed Butch and pulled him away. Molly carefully picked up the bird and tried to console it with a soothing voice.

“I think its wing is broken,” whispered Molly.

“Let’s take it to my house. Dad will know what to do,” said Tom.

Back at the house, Tom’s dad looked the bird over. He agreed that the wing was broken. Carefully, he set the wing to keep it still.

“The bird will need looking after until its wing heals,” said Tom’s dad. “Are you up for it?”

“Oh, sure,” both Tom and Molly replied.

“You’ll need to keep it fed and watered every day,” cautioned Tom’s dad.

“We will,” promised Tom. The two found an old birdcage in the garage and set it on Tom’s porch. Molly put the bird inside while Tom found a water dish.

Molly suggested, “How about we take turns? I’ll go hunt for some worms while you stay and watch the bird. Tomorrow we’ll switch.”

“Okay,” agreed Tom.

The two friends took turns caring for the bird. They became quite fond of the little bird as each day it grew stronger.

After a few weeks had passed, Tom’s dad said, “It looks fine.” The bird seemed to confirm this as it fluttered both wings.

“I think we need to keep the bird a while longer,” said Tom.

“Yeah. I don’t want to let it go too soon and have it not be able to live on its own,” chimed in Molly.

“You know this bird owes you its life,” said Tom’s dad. “But now it’s time to let it go.”

“Okay, Dad,” said Tom. “We’ll take it to the woods this afternoon.”



(continued on next page)

ARMT GRADE 6 READING

Butch tagged along as Molly and Tom walked slowly to the trees where they had first found the bird. Opening the cage door, they stood back. The bird hopped slowly to the opening and then suddenly flew out. It settled on a nearby tree limb. Butch barked once, and the bird flew off into the deep green needles of the pine trees.

“Well, Butch, it’s bath time again,” said Tom. “But we’ll make sure you don’t get out until you’re dry.”

1. The author’s purpose in writing “The Bird” is to —

- A** tell about keeping wild birds as pets
- B** show how caring people can help injured animals
- C** teach how to care for young wildlife
- D** illustrate how surprise inconveniences happen

2. What is the climax of the story?

- A** The bird flew out of the cage.
- B** The bird flapped one wing, trying to fly.
- C** Molly and Tom took turns gathering worms.
- D** The bird lived in the old birdcage.

3. The beginning of the story and the ending of the story are *similar* in that —

- A** Butch disappears in the woods
- B** Molly and Tom capture a bird
- C** Butch is in need of a bath
- D** Tom’s dad helps the bird

4. The main conflict of the story can be described as —

- A** man against nature
- B** man against society
- C** man against himself
- D** man against man

ARMT GRADE 6 READING

5. One detail that supports the main idea of this story is —

- A** Butch is bathed weekly
- B** Butch was barking at a bird
- C** Molly handled the bird very gently
- D** Tom set the bird's broken wing

7. You can tell that Tom's dad —

- A** is nervous about caring for animals
- B** wishes to keep the injured bird for a pet
- C** is unhappy with Tom and Molly
- D** wants what is best for the bird

6. One conflict in the story is that Butch —

- A** prefers to run in the woods rather than play
- B** does not like to take baths, but needs one
- C** likes to roll in the dirt after having a bath
- D** does not like to bark if there is trouble

8. The author describes how Tom and Molly take care of the bird in order to —

- A** suggest a way to begin a wild animal hospital
- B** show that being kind and helpful can save a life
- C** imply that wild birds can interact well with dogs
- D** compare how birds and dogs interact with people

ARMT GRADE 6 READING

9. The conflict Tom and Molly have when letting the bird go is about —

- A** working
- B** helping
- C** feelings
- D** bathing

11. Identify *two* different ways Tom and Molly help animals in the story. Explain how their interaction is important to the main idea of the story.

Use specific information from the story to support your response.

Write your response in the answer document.

10. Identify the *two* times that Tom's dad plays an important role in helping the bird. Explain how his behavior teaches Tom and Molly some valuable lessons.

Use specific information from the story to support your response.

Write your response in the answer document.

Picnic in the Backyard

A nice soft blanket
to lay upon the green prickly grass

A perfect spot
under a tree;

- 5 the shade protecting me from the hot rays of the sun

I like to fall asleep outdoors sometimes

- Ice cold drinks to refresh me
homemade sandwiches and fresh ripe fruit
perhaps some salad to further remind me
10 of the joys of nature

And, of course
some savory dessert
I mean, how can you have a picnic lunch
without a delectable dessert

- 15 Fresh air and sunshine
a nice summertime breeze
the sound of birds singing and crickets chirping

Dining outdoors
with the wind blowing through my hair

- 20 How lovely everything seems
on a bright sunny day

The ants may be tempted
but they are certainly not invited to join

- Perhaps I'll leave some cookie crumbs
25 a few feet away
to divert them
from my perfect picnic



1. Which sentence *best* describes the main idea of this poem?

- A** Nature makes a picnic very enjoyable.
- B** A picnic is not complete without dessert.
- C** Food tastes better when it is eaten at a picnic.
- D** Fresh air makes it easy to fall asleep at a picnic.

4. In the future, the narrator will *probably* —

- A** invite his friends to come along
- B** enjoy his picnic lunch indoors
- C** bring an extra dessert with him
- D** find another perfect spot outdoors

2. What does the narrator believe will spoil the picnic?

- A** The hot sun
- B** Prickly grass
- C** Invading ants
- D** A strong wind

5. In line 17 of the poem, the narrator writes about “the sound of birds singing and crickets chirping.”

This line helps the reader —

- A** prepare for the mention of ants later in the poem
- B** imagine what the narrator is hearing at the picnic
- C** remember that the setting of this poem is outdoors
- D** know what animal noises to expect at a picnic

3. What did the narrator plan to do in order to solve the problem?

- A** Take a nap
- B** Lie on a blanket
- C** Sit in the shade of a tree
- D** Put crumbs away from the picnic

6. How could the wind in this poem *best* be personified?

- A A warm breeze flows over the perfect picnic.
- B A warm breeze blows through the trees.
- C A summer breeze combs my hair with its fingers.
- D A warm summer wind comforts me.

9. You can tell that the narrator—

- A prefers cookies to fruit
- B dislikes sleeping on the grass
- C enjoys a sunny summer day
- D likes to play outdoor sports

7. The narrator is *similar* to the ants in that they all —

- A want to enjoy the picnic
- B like to listen to nature
- C need some relaxation
- D prefer the shade of a tree

10. In this poem, what is the speaker's opinion of nature?

Use at least *three* details from the poem to support your answer.

Write your response in the answer document.

8. In the poem, which of these items is different from the others?

- A “bright sunny day”
- B “delectable dessert”
- C “summertime breeze”
- D “fresh air and sunshine”

11. Explain the speaker's plan to protect his “perfect” picnic.

Use details from the poem in your response.

Write your response in the answer document.

It's About Time . . .

People have been keeping time for thousands of years. The first timekeeping devices were very inaccurate. They measured time by the sun, or by the falling levels of water or sand. The sundial was developed from a simple observation. As the Earth turns, the sun appears to cross the sky and the shadows it casts move across the ground. If the positions of the shadows are marked at regular intervals, they can be used to tell the time.

The first clocks we know much about were made toward the end of the 13th century. Some of them had no hands and no faces. These clocks told time simply by striking the hour. Bells were important parts of early clocks. The word “clock” comes from the French word *cloche*, which means bell.

Hammers held in the hands of little figures of people struck the bells of some of the early clocks. These little figures were called “jacks-of-the-clock.”

In 1713, the British government offered a money prize of 10,000 pounds to anyone who could make a timepiece that would keep really accurate time. It was 47 years before the prize was won. A timepiece that lost less than 2 minutes on an ocean voyage of 5 months won it. The timepiece was called a chronometer. A little later, a chronometer was made that lost only 7 seconds on a 46-day voyage. From chronometers, watch and clockmakers found ways of making their clocks and watches better.

Mechanical clocks are much more accurate. They have three main parts: an energy supply, a mechanism for regulating the energy, and a way of showing the passing of time.

A coiled spring or a weight supplies the energy. The weight hangs on a cord wound around a shaft so that the weight turns the shaft to move the gears. The spring unwinds, or the weight falls and turns a series of interlocking toothed wheels. Hands linked to the wheels rotate around a dial. The gears make sure that the minute hand goes around twelve times faster than the hour hand.

Now many clocks have neither springs nor weights. Many are run by electricity. Electric clocks are very good and very dependable timekeepers.

Digital or electronic watches have a piece of quartz crystal that vibrates at 32,768 times a second. An electronic circuit uses these movements to turn the hands or change numbers on the watch face.



1. You would *probably* find this passage in a —

- A world atlas
- B literature book
- C magazine about clocks
- D book about school bells

2. What belongs in the empty box in this timeline of timekeeping development?



- A Hammer clocks
- B Spring clocks
- C Electric clocks
- D Chronometers

3. Based on the information in the passage, what prediction can you make about how clocks will change in the future?

Use information from the passage to support your response.

Write your response in the answer document.

4. What is the main idea of this passage?

Support your response with details from the passage.

Write your response in the answer document.

YOU CAN MAKE ADINKRA CLOTH!

Adinkra is stamped cloth made by the Ashanti people in the African country of Ghana. The cloth is named for one of their kings. It is stamped with symbols that tell about who the Ashanti people are. The images are repeated to make a pattern. You can use symbols that tell something about you.

Making the stamps:

Adinkra symbols used by the people of Ghana:



Symbols you might use:



Materials:

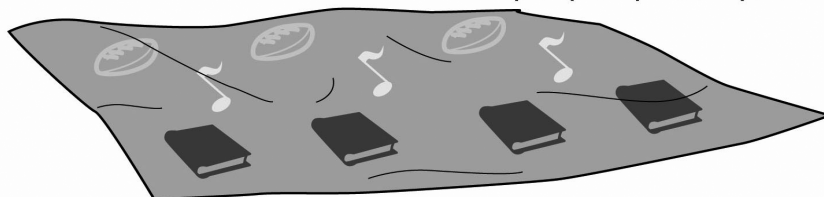
1. Potatoes or kitchen sponges
2. Craft knife or scissors
3. Fabric paints in many colors
4. Paper or plastic plate
5. White cotton cloth

How the Ashanti people make Adinkra:

1. The Ashanti cut and carve a hard gourd into shapes they like.
2. They choose symbols from their lives or a wise saying they want to remember.
3. The Ashanti cut the symbol into the gourd. Each symbol is unique.
4. They make inks out of roots and tree bark.
5. They press the stamp into the ink, then onto the cloth. They repeat this process again and again to make a pattern. They stamp in parallel lines so all the symbols are in a line running next to each other.

How you can make Adinkra:

1. You will use the sponges or potatoes instead of a gourd to make your stamps.
2. Choose shapes and symbols that are part of your life.
3. Draw the shapes and symbols on the sponges or potatoes using a marker. Use the scissors or craft knife to cut the shapes out. Remember to cut away the parts that you don't want to print onto the cloth.
4. Squeeze some fabric paint onto the plate. Press your stamps onto the paint.
5. Test your stamps on a piece of paper towel or paper plate before you begin stamping on the cloth. Repeat your symbols in parallel lines to make a pattern.



Like the cloth of the Ashanti people, when the paint has dried, your cloth is ready. You can sew blocks of stamped cloth together like a quilt. You can also use your stamps to decorate your clothing, table cloths, napkins, or curtains. You can use your stamps on paper, too, to make a picture or to make wrapping paper. Look at your cloth. Do your symbols *convey* who you are?

1. Which part of the process of making Adinkra cloth takes the *most* time to complete?

- A** Draw the shapes on the potatoes or sponges.
- B** Squeeze your paint onto a plate.
- C** Let the fabric completely dry.
- D** Stamp designs onto the fabric in parallel lines.

2. This selection is designed *mostly* for people who —

- A** study foreign ancient cultures
- B** enjoy making personal crafts
- C** live in African countries
- D** want to learn more about symbols

3. Explain what a student can learn by participating in an activity from another culture.

Write your response in the answer document.

4. Explain the relationship of selecting unique stamp designs to creating Adinkra cloth.

Write your response in the answer document.

How Writing Developed

Today we see writing all around us. There is writing in books, on signs, and on computer screens. Most children learn to read and write at an early age and use these skills to gather and share information in books, magazines, letters, and e-mail messages. Businesses depend on written words to communicate and to sell products. Governments rely on written documents as the basis for their laws. We would be lost without writing.

The earliest people had no system of writing. Writing developed over thousands of years in different cultures around the world. Peoples in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Crete, China, and elsewhere all made important contributions.

Before writing as we know it existed, drawings were used as a form of communication. Rock drawings have been found in many places. One rock drawing in a mountainous region of New Mexico shows a mountain goat standing up and a man riding a horse upside down. Archaeologists believe that the drawing was a warning to riders that the trail was too steep.

Modern forms of writing began when people learned to use symbols, such as letters and words, to stand for ideas. At first, they used pictures that stood for words. For example, a picture might show a hunter, the weapons the hunter used, and a pair of deer the hunter killed. Further developments occurred in Mesopotamia, where people known as Sumerians learned to use the same symbols to stand for different words. The writing used by ancient Egyptians used symbols known as hieroglyphs. It was similar to the writing of the Sumerians.

Even greater advances were made in China about 3500 years ago. The Chinese used tens of thousands of signs. With their system, they could write proper names and new words. This, however, was a *knotty* system. To make writing easier, things had to be simplified in some way. The answer was the development of alphabets. The Phoenicians are often credited with developing one of the first useful alphabets. The Phoenician alphabet used about 20 or 30 signs. They were well on their way to at least one type of modern writing because, as we know, the modern English alphabet uses 26 letters.



ARMT GRADE 6 READING

1. You can tell from information in this passage that —

- A** all early art dealt mainly with hunting
- B** the Phoenician alphabet is more difficult to understand than the English alphabet
- C** drawing was one of the earliest forms of written communication
- D** people from many cultures understood Egyptian hieroglyphs

2. The author of this passage probably finds the history of writing development to be —

- A** fascinating
- B** humorous
- C** challenging
- D** useless

3. The word *knotty* is used in this passage to mean —

- A** effective
- B** complicated
- C** mysterious
- D** acceptable

4. According to this passage, the form of writing that occurred after rock drawings used —

- A** symbols such as letters and words
- B** the use of proper names and new words
- C** the Phoenician alphabet
- D** the modern English alphabet

ARMT GRADE 6 READING

5. This passage would *most likely* appear in a book titled—

- A *The Tombs of Egypt*
- B *Getting Your Stories Published*
- C *Great Advances in Human History*
- D *China's Relations with the West*

7. Who does the passage say is thought to have developed one of the first useful alphabets?

- A The Sumerians
- B The Egyptians
- C The Chinese
- D The Phoenicians

6. The purpose of the first paragraph is to —

- A show how important writing is in our daily lives
- B emphasize that writing is used mostly in business and government
- C contrast writing done by young people with the writing of adults
- D compare writing in print form with writing done on a computer

8. Which sentence is an *opinion*?

- A “Today we see writing all around us.”
- B “We would be lost without writing.”
- C “The earliest people had no system of writing.”
- D “The Phoenician alphabet used about 20 or 30 signs.”

9. According to the passage, the Sumerians first began writing to —

- A** tell stories about their history
- B** send warning messages to travelers
- C** establish the laws of their government
- D** keep track of things such as animals

11. What is the author's attitude toward the subject of the passage?

How do you know?

Use examples from the passage to show how the author feels about the topic.

Write your response in the answer document.

10. According to the passage, a rock picture in New Mexico showed an upside down —

- A** pair of deer
- B** herd of cattle
- C** horse and rider
- D** mountain goat

- 12. In the 5th paragraph, the author uses the phrase “a *knotty* system.”**

What did the author mean by this phrase?

Why did the author choose these words to express his idea?

Write your response in the answer document.

- 13. Before modern alphabets and writing were developed, how did people communicate with one another through nonverbal means?**

How was that communication useful?

What problems could that communication cause?

Use examples from the passage in your response.

Write your response in the answer document.

**ITEMS NOT
ASSOCIATED WITH
A PASSAGE**

PERSONIFICATION ITEMS

These are the directions given to students.

DIRECTIONS:

Read each question. Decide which is the best answer to the question. Then mark the space for the answer you have chosen.

1. Which is the *best* example of personification?

- A Roy's locker is like a junkyard.
- B Roy's locker contains his P.E. equipment.
- C Roy's locker struggles to hold his belongings.
- D Roy's locker is stuffed with books.

3. Which is the *best* example of personification?

- A The lion stretched and purred like a kitten.
- B Bob's talent is his ticket to success.
- C The rocks were his memories of where he had been.
- D Another car coughed and roared to life.

2. Which is the *best* example of personification?

- A Billy's rowboat skated gracefully across the lake.
- B Billy's rowboat moved across the lake.
- C Billy's rowboat sank when we sat in it.
- D Billy's rowboat can carry up to five people.

4. Which is the *best* example of personification?

- A As I rested on the back porch, I felt peaceful.
- B As I rested on the back porch, I was as still as a rock.
- C As I rested on the back porch, the crickets sang a song to me.
- D As I rested on the back porch, the bugs didn't bother me.

ITEMS BY CONTENT STANDARD

Content Standard 1

Apply strategies, including making complex predictions, interpreting characters' behaviors, and comparing and contrasting, to comprehend sixth-grade literary/recreational materials.

Examples: complex predictions—order of events, potential conflicts

- Identifying supporting details
- Using context clues
- Identifying sequence of events
- Making generalizations

Item Type

Multiple-choice

Open-ended

Additional Information

Items associated with literary/recreational passages

Sample Multiple-Choice Items

The items below reference “The Bird” on page 5.

1. The beginning of the story and the ending of the story are *similar* in that —

- A** Butch disappears in the woods
- B** Molly and Tom capture a bird
- C*** Butch is in need of a bath
- D** Tom’s dad helps the bird

2. You can tell that Tom’s dad —

- A** is nervous about caring for animals
- B** wishes to keep the injured bird for a pet
- C** is unhappy with Tom and Molly
- D*** wants what is best for the bird

ARMT GRADE 6 READING

The item below references “The Bird” on page 5.

3. One detail that supports the main idea of this story is —

- A Butch is bathed weekly
- B Butch was barking at a bird
- C* Molly handled the bird gently
- D Tom set the bird’s broken wing

The items below reference “Picnic in the Backyard” on page 9.

5. The narrator is *similar* to the ants in that they all —

- A* want to enjoy the picnic
- B like to listen to nature
- C need some relaxation
- D prefer the shade of a tree

The item below references “Picnic in the Backyard” on page 9.

4. In the future, the narrator will *probably* —

- A invite his friends to come along
- B enjoy his picnic lunch indoors
- C bring an extra dessert with him
- D* find another perfect spot outdoors

6. In the poem, which of these items is different from the others?

- A “bright sunny day”
- B* “delectable dessert”
- C “summertime breeze”
- D “fresh air and sunshine”

7. You can tell that the narrator—

- A prefers cookies to fruit
- B dislikes sleeping on the grass
- C* enjoys a sunny summer day
- D likes to play outdoor sports

Sample Open-Ended Items

The item below references “The Bird” on page 5.

- 1. Identify the *two* times that Tom’s dad plays an important role in helping the bird. Explain how his behavior teaches Tom and Molly some valuable lessons.**

Use specific information from the story to support your response.

Write your response in the answer document.

The item below references “Picnic in the Backyard” on page 9.

- 2. In this poem, what is the speaker’s opinion of nature?**

Use at least *three* details from the poem to support your answer.

Write your response in the answer document.

Content Standard 2

Interpret literary elements and devices, including implied main idea, conflict, and personification.

- Identifying the climax

Item Type

Multiple-choice

Open-ended

Items not associated with a passage

Additional Information

Items associated with literary/recreational passages

Items not associated with literary/recreational passages

Sample Multiple-Choice Items

The items below reference “The Bird” on page 5.

1. The author’s purpose in writing “The Bird” is to —

- A** tell about keeping wild birds as pets
- B*** show how caring people can help injured animals
- C** teach how to care for young wildlife
- D** illustrate how surprise inconveniences happen

2. What is the climax of the story?

- A*** The bird flew out of the cage.
- B** The bird flapped one wing, trying to fly.
- C** Molly and Tom took turns gathering worms.
- D** The bird lived in the old birdcage.

ARMT GRADE 6 READING

The items below reference “The Bird” on page 5.

3. The main conflict of the story can be described as —

- A** man against nature
- B** man against society
- C*** man against himself
- D** man against man

4. One conflict in the story is that Butch —

- A** prefers to run in the woods rather than play
- B*** does not like to take baths, but needs one
- C** likes to roll in the dirt after having a bath
- D** does not like to bark if there is trouble

5. The author describes how Tom and Molly take care of the bird in order to —

- A** suggest a way to begin a wild animal hospital
- B*** show that being kind and helpful can save a life
- C** imply that wild birds can interact well with dogs
- D** compare how birds and dogs interact with people

6. The conflict Tom and Molly have when letting the bird go is about —

- A** working
- B** helping
- C*** feelings
- D** bathing

ARMT GRADE 6 READING

The items below reference “Picnic in the Backyard” on page 9.

7. Which sentence *best* describes the main idea of this poem?

- A*** Nature makes a picnic very enjoyable.
- B** A picnic is not complete without dessert.
- C** Food tastes better when it is eaten at a picnic.
- D** Fresh air makes it easy to fall asleep at a picnic.

9. What did the narrator plan to do in order to solve the problem?

- A** Take a nap
- B** Lie on a blanket
- C** Sit in the shade of a tree
- D*** Put crumbs away from the picnic

8. What does the narrator believe will spoil the picnic?

- A** The hot sun
- B** Prickly grass
- C*** Invading ants
- D** A strong wind

ARMT GRADE 6 READING

The items below reference “Picnic in the Backyard” on page 9.

10. In line 17 of the poem, the narrator writes about “the sound of birds singing and crickets chirping.”

This line helps the reader —

- A** prepare for the mention of ants later in the poem
- B*** imagine what the narrator is hearing at the picnic
- C** remember that the setting of this poem is outdoors
- D** know what animal noises to expect at a picnic

11. How could the wind in this poem *best* be personified?

- A** A warm breeze flows over the perfect picnic.
- B** A warm breeze blows through the trees.
- C*** A summer breeze combs my hair with its fingers.
- D** A warm summer wind comforts me.

ARMT GRADE 6 READING

The items below reference “Personification Items” on page 22.

12. Which is the *best* example of personification?

- A** Roy’s locker is like a junkyard.
- B** Roy’s locker contains his P.E. equipment.
- C*** Roy’s locker struggles to hold his belongings.
- D** Roy’s locker is stuffed with books.

14. Which is the *best* example of personification?

- A** The lion stretched and purred like a kitten.
- B** Bob’s talent is his ticket to success.
- C** The rocks were his memories of where he had been.
- D*** Another car coughed and roared to life.

13. Which is the *best* example of personification?

- A*** Billy’s rowboat skated gracefully across the lake.
- B** Billy’s rowboat moved across the lake.
- C** Billy’s rowboat sank when we sat in it.
- D** Billy’s rowboat can carry up to five people.

15. Which is the *best* example of personification?

- A** As I rested on the back porch, I felt peaceful.
- B** As I rested on the back porch, I was as still as a rock.
- C*** As I rested on the back porch, the crickets sang a song to me.
- D** As I rested on the back porch, the bugs didn’t bother me.

Sample Open-Ended Items

The item below references “The Bird” on page 5.

- 1. Identify *two* different ways Tom and Molly help animals in the story. Explain how their interaction is important to the main idea of the story.**

Use specific information from the story to support your response.

Write your response in the answer document.

The item below references “Picnic in the Backyard” on page 9.

- 2. Explain the speaker’s plan to protect his “perfect” picnic.**

Use details from the poem in your response.

Write your response in the answer document.

Content Standard 3

Apply strategies that include making complex predictions, identifying the likely source of a text, and comparing and contrasting to comprehend sixth-grade textual/informational and functional materials.

Examples: complex predictions — results of actions, expected learning from a chapter or unit

- Drawing conclusions
- Making generalizations
- Using context clues
- Identifying sequence of events
- Previewing text features, such as headings, before reading

Item Type

Multiple-choice

Open-ended

Additional Information

Items associated with textual/informational and functional passages

Sample Multiple-Choice Items

The item below references “It’s About Time ...” on page 12.

1. You would *probably* find this passage in a —

- A world atlas
- B literature book
- C* magazine about clocks
- D book about school bells

ARMT GRADE 6 READING

The item below references “It’s About Time ...” on page 12.

2. What belongs in the empty box in this timeline of timekeeping development?



- A Hammer clocks
- B Spring clocks
- C* Electric clocks
- D Chronometers

The item below references “You Can Make Adinkra Cloth!” on page 14.

3. Which part of the process of making Adinkra cloth takes the *most* time to complete?

- A Draw the shapes on the potatoes or sponges.
- B Squeeze your paint onto a plate.
- C* Let the fabric completely dry.
- D Stamp designs onto the fabric in parallel lines.

The item below references “How Writing Developed” on page 16.

4. You can tell from information in this passage that —

- A all early art dealt mainly with hunting
- B the Phoenician alphabet is more difficult to understand than the English alphabet
- C* drawing was one of the earliest forms of written communication
- D people from many cultures understood Egyptian hieroglyphs

ARMT GRADE 6 READING

The items below reference “How Writing Developed” on page 16.

5. The author of this passage probably finds the history of writing development to be —

- A*** fascinating
- B** humorous
- C** challenging
- D** useless

6. The word *knotty* is used in this passage to mean —

- A** effective
- B*** complicated
- C** mysterious
- D** acceptable

7. According to this passage, the form of writing that occurred after rock drawings used —

- A*** symbols such as letters and words
- B** the use of proper names and new words
- C** the Phoenician alphabet
- D** the modern English alphabet

ARMT GRADE 6 READING

The items below reference “How Writing Developed” on page 16.

8. This passage would *most likely* appear in a book titled—

- A** *The Tombs of Egypt*
- B** *Getting Your Stories Published*
- C*** *Great Advances in Human History*
- D** *China’s Relations with the West*

9. The purpose of the first paragraph is to —

- A*** show how important writing is in our daily lives
- B** emphasize that writing is used mostly in business and government
- C** contrast writing done by young people with the writing of adults
- D** compare writing in print form with writing done on a computer

Sample Open-Ended Items

The item below references “It’s About Time ...” on page 12.

- 1. Based on the information in the passage, what prediction can you make about how clocks will change in the future?**

Use information from the passage to support your response.

Write your response in the answer document.

The items below reference “How Writing Developed” on page 16.

- 3. What is the author’s attitude toward the subject of the passage?**

How do you know?

Use examples from the passage to show how the author feels about the topic.

Write your response in the answer document.

The item below references “You Can Make Adinkra Cloth!” on page 14.

- 2. Explain what a student can learn by participating in an activity from another culture.**

Write your response in the answer document.

- 4. In the 5th paragraph, the author uses the phrase “a *knotty* system.”**

What did the author mean by this phrase?

Why did the author choose these words to express his idea?

Write your response in the answer document.

Content Standard 4

Recognize the use of text elements, including implied main idea, explicit cause-effect relationships, and persuasive techniques, in sixth-grade textual/informational or functional materials.

- Details related to main idea

Item Type

Multiple-choice

Open-ended

Additional Information

Items associated with textual/informational and functional passages

Sample Multiple-Choice Items

The item below references “You Can Make Adinkra Cloth!” on page 14.

1. This selection is designed *mostly* for people who —

- A** study foreign ancient cultures
- B*** enjoy making personal crafts
- C** live in African countries
- D** want to learn more about symbols

The item below references “How Writing Developed” on page 16.

2. Who does the passage say is thought to have developed one of the first useful alphabets?

- A** The Sumerians
- B** The Egyptians
- C** The Chinese
- D*** The Phoenicians

ARMT GRADE 6 READING

The items below reference “How Writing Developed” on page 16.

3. Which sentence is an *opinion*?

- A** “Today we see writing all around us.”
- B*** “We would be lost without writing.”
- C** “The earliest people had no system of writing.”
- D** “The Phoenician alphabet used about 20 or 30 signs.”

5. According to the passage, a rock picture in New Mexico showed an upside down —

- A** pair of deer
- B** herd of cattle
- C*** horse and rider
- D** mountain goat

4. According to the passage, the Sumerians first began writing to —

- A** tell stories about their history
- B** send warning messages to travelers
- C** establish the laws of their government
- D*** keep track of things such as animals

Sample Open-Ended Items

The item below references “It’s About Time ...” on page 12.

- 1. What is the main idea of this passage?**

Support your response with details from the passage.

Write your response in the answer document.

The item below references “You Can Make Adinkra Cloth!” on page 14.

- 2. Explain the relationship of selecting unique stamp designs to creating Adinkra cloth.**

Write your response in the answer document.

The item below references “How Writing Developed” on page 16.

- 3. Before modern alphabets and writing were developed, how did people communicate with one another through nonverbal means?**

How was that communication useful?

What problems could that communication cause?

Use examples from the passage in your response.

Write your response in the answer document.

ANSWER KEY

ANSWER KEY

“The Bird” (pages 5–8)

Item	Correct Answer	Content Standard
1.	B	2
2.	A	2
3.	C	1
4.	C	2
5.	C	1
6.	B	2
7.	D	1
8.	B	2
9.	C	2

10. Content Standard 1

Score Point	The response should
3	demonstrate a thorough understanding of both times that Tom’s dad plays an important role by 1) setting the bird’s broken wing and 2) giving advice on its care and release and how that behavior teaches Tom and Molly valuable lessons. The response includes multiple, specific details from the passage for support.
2	demonstrate a general understanding of both times that Tom’s dad plays an important role. The response includes some less-developed details from the passage for support.
1	demonstrate a limited understanding of one time that Tom’s dad plays an important role. The response includes bare or no details for support.
0	demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt.

11. Content Standard 2

Score Point	The response should
3	demonstrate a thorough understanding of <i>two</i> different ways that Tom and Molly helped animals. Examples may include but are not limited to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rescuing the bird from danger • caring for the bird • setting the bird free to its environment The response should also include specific details to support the idea that their interaction saved a bird’s life and/or taught them responsibility.
2	demonstrate a general understanding of <i>two</i> different ways that Tom and Molly helped animals and include one or two details that are less developed to support the response.
1	demonstrate a limited understanding of <i>one</i> way that Tom and Molly helped animals and include two or fewer bare details to support the response.
0	demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt.

ANSWER KEY

“Picnic in the Backyard” (pages 9–11)

Item	Correct Answer	Content Standard
1.	A	2
2.	C	2
3.	D	2
4.	D	1
5.	B	2
6.	C	2
7.	A	1
8.	B	1
9.	C	1

10. Content Standard 1

Score Point	The response should
3	<p>demonstrate a thorough understanding that the speaker enjoys most aspects of nature except for, of course, the ants invading his picnic and includes at least <i>three</i> details from the poem in support. Examples could include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The speaker “likes to fall asleep outdoors sometimes.” • Ripe fruit and salad remind the speaker of “the joys of nature.” • Speaker likes the “fresh air and sunshine” and a “nice summertime breeze” that blows through his hair. • Speaker talks about the sounds of nature such as the bird and crickets singing.
2	demonstrate a general understanding of the speaker’s positive opinion of nature and include at least <i>two</i> details from the poem in support.
1	demonstrate a limited understanding of the speaker’s positive opinion of nature and include one correct detail for support.
0	demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt.

ARMT GRADE 6 READING

“Picnic in the Backyard” (continued)

11. Content Standard 2

Score Point	The response should
3	thoroughly explain how and why the speaker plans to distract the ants and include complete details for support. Examples could include, but are not limited to, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speaker leaves cookie crumbs a few feet away.• He hopes ants will be attracted to the cookie crumbs and leave the rest of his picnic food alone.
2	generally explain how and why the speaker plans to distract the ants and include some detail for support.
1	give a limited explanation of how and why the speaker plans to distract the ants with bare or no support.
0	demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt.

ANSWER KEY

“It’s About Time . . .” (pages 12–13)

Item	Correct Answer	Content Standard
1.	C	3
2.	C	3

3. Content Standard 3

Score Point	The response should
3	thoroughly explain the student’s prediction for one or more ways that clocks may change in the future and include complete details for support. The response should include references to how clocks have already changed over the past thousands of years.
2	generally explain the student’s prediction for one or more ways that clocks may change in the future and include some supporting details. The response may include weak or no references to how clocks have already changed over the past thousands of years.
1	give a limited explanation of the student’s prediction for one or more ways that clocks may change in the future.
0	demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt.

4. Content Standard 4

Score Point	The response should
3	thoroughly explain what the student thinks is the main idea of the passage. Details from the passage should support the idea that as science and technology advance, so will the development of timekeeping devices.
2	generally explain what the student thinks is the main idea of the passage. Some elements of a score point 3 passage may be present, but response is less organized or less complete.
1	give a limited explanation as to what the student thinks is the main idea of the passage with bare or no support.
0	demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt.

ANSWER KEY

“You Can Make Adinkra Cloth!” (pages 14–15)

Item	Correct Answer	Content Standard
1.	C	3
2.	B	4

3. Content Standard 3

Score Point	The response should
3	demonstrate a thorough understanding of what students can learn by participating in activities from another culture and include complete details for support. Examples may include, but are not limited to, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expressing oneself • creating a personal history • exploring another culture • being creative/artistic • trying something new
2	demonstrate a general understanding of the type of learning that can be gained by this type of activity but be less supported or developed than a score point 3 response.
1	demonstrate a limited understanding of the purpose of cultural activities and may include bare or no support.
0	demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt.

4. Content Standard 4

Score Point	The response should
3	thoroughly explain the relationship of selecting unique designs to creating Adinkra cloth and include complete details for support. Examples may include, but are not limited to, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The unique and individually designed stamps, arranged in parallel lines, are what make the cloth special. • The designs tell about the individual who created the cloth.
2	generally explain the relationship of selecting unique designs to creating Adinkra cloth and include some details for support. The response is less organized or less complete than a score point 3 response.
1	give a limited explanation of the relationship of selecting unique designs to creating Adinkra cloth and include bare or no detail for support.
0	demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt.

ANSWER KEY

“How Writing Developed” (pages 16–20)

Item	Correct Answer	Content Standard
1.	C	3
2.	A	3
3.	B	3
4.	A	3
5.	C	3
6.	A	3
7.	D	4
8.	B	4
9.	D	4
10.	C	4

11. Content Standard 3

Score Point	The response should
3	<p>demonstrate a thorough understanding of the author’s positive feelings toward the subject of writing based on his stated opinions and include complete details for support. Examples could include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The author feels that writing is necessary to maintain communication, which is why so many cultures developed it over time. • The author states that “we would be lost without writing.” • The author explores the different forms of writing and how they helped various cultures.
2	demonstrate a general understanding of the author’s positive feelings toward the subject of writing based on his stated opinions. The response includes some detail, but is less organized or less developed than a score point 3 response.
1	demonstrate a limited understanding of the author’s positive feelings toward the subject of writing based on his stated opinions. The response includes bare or no support.
0	demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt.

ANSWER KEY

“How Writing Developed” (continued)

12. Content Standard 3

Score Point	The response should
3	include a thorough explanation of the phrase and complete details for support. Examples could include, but are not limited to, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A knotty system refers to a complex or confusing process. • The knotty system refers to knots and, by nature, means to be tangled or twisted. • This knotty system is used to illustrate the difficulty of language based on so many symbols.
2	include a general explanation of the phrase and some details for support, but is less organized or less developed than a score point 3 response.
1	include a limited explanation of the phrase and bare or no support.
0	demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt.

13. Content Standard 4

Score Point	The response should
3	demonstrate a thorough understanding that people used drawings to communicate useful information but that there were often limitations to these warnings, and include complete details for support. Examples could include, but are not limited to, the following: PARTS 1 and 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawings were used to tell stories to pass down history through generations • Drawings were used to give warnings about certain dangers or problems encountered. PART 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These messages could often be misunderstood, not have enough detail, or not be seen by enough people to be effective.
2	demonstrate a general understanding that people used drawings to communicate useful information but that there were often limitations to these warnings. The response includes some detail, but is less organized or less developed than a score point 3 response.
1	demonstrate a limited understanding that people used drawings to communicate useful information but that there were often limitations to these warnings. The response includes bare or no support.
0	demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt.

ARMT GRADE 6 READING

ANSWER KEY

Personification Items (page 22)

Item	Correct Answer	Content Standard
1.	C	2
2.	A	2
3.	D	2
4.	C	2

SAMPLE RESPONSE FORMAT

SAMPLE RESPONSE: MULTIPLE-CHOICE

1	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
2	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
3	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
4	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
5	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)

6	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
7	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
8	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)

9	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
10	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)

SAMPLE RESPONSE: OPEN-ENDED

DO NOT WRITE OUTSIDE THE BOX.

Answer question __ in this box.

DO NOT WRITE OUTSIDE THE BOX.

DO NOT WRITE OUTSIDE THE BOX.

DO NOT WRITE OUTSIDE THE BOX.