



Exemplar Grade 7 Reading Test Questions



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Introduction

This booklet explains ACT Aspire® Grade 7 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 7 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 as well as influences on the English language; 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: “From *The Red Camp*”

From *The Red Camp* by Debra Diaz

I draw horses. Over and over and over again until each arch of the neck, curve of the flank and angle in the fetlock is perfect. Horses are all I think about. I draw them, study them, collect all sizes of
5 horse figures.

Mrs. DeAngelis, my sixth-grade teacher, has asked Janine, Stacey, and me to stay after school. She wants to know why every day before school, during recess, after lunch and sometimes even
10 after school, she sees the three of us running around the fields like we’re crazy. I don’t want to say anything, but she threatens us with detention. So Stacey steps up and tells her about the secret club we formed and how we’re practicing real hard
15 to make the next Olympics. Mrs. DeAngelis smiles and says she’s very proud of us. Janine and I say nothing, marveling at how easily Stacey can lie.

Our club is not really about the Olympics. We don’t talk about it much, but I think it means
20 something different to each one of us. Our club is kind of like a family. A family of horses. And we race because we love to run. We’ve even made up our own club symbol, which is a large triangle with three small triangles, each small one intersecting
25 one of the three angles of the large triangle. In the center of the large triangle is the letter “A” for Arabians, our club name, and in the center of the small triangles is the initial of each of our secret names. Mine starts with “S” and that is all I can
30 say.

We told our good friend Patty Maloney about the club, and she didn’t really understand. Patty likes horses, but she doesn’t love horses like we do. When we told her we ARE the horses, she
35 looked at us really weird. I knew we had to stop then. So I laughed and made a joke and said, “Not really,” and Stacey and Janine laughed, too.

“How could we possibly be horses?” Stacey roared.

40 Patty laughed along with us, a kind of crooked, unsure laugh.

But we are the horses. Or rather, we become them.

We each have a stable of 25 horses, each
45 horse with its own name, personality and racing style.

Stacey has the long-distance runners. She trains them by running the length of the entire playing field over and over again. She can run
50 forever. Stacey has a deep chest, strong lungs and comes from behind like most good distance runners. But lately her ankles have been bothering her, and we’ve been discussing getting them fixed.

The sprinters belong to Janine, who holds the
55 50-yard dash record and who has calf muscles like small hams. My horses are the middle distancers and I have long, lean legs, strong quick feet and good timing.

Over and over again we race our horses up
60 and down the field, building our strength, increasing our speed and practicing in the winter rain and during the long smoggy summer months.

I guess we are kind of nuts about this, but we do it because we have to. When I’m running, the
65 earth is a part of me. The wind urges me on and the grass springs up below me, lifting me upward and onward. Sometimes I run so fast, I feel I’m galloping on all fours, flying low, devouring the ground. When I’m running nothing else matters.
70 The sun, the mist, the smells take over. I disappear.

Pages 61–63 are reprinted with permission from the publisher of *The Red Camp* by Debra Diaz (©1996 Arte Publico Press–University of Houston).

Question 1

From *The Red Camp*
by Debra Diaz

I draw horses. Over and over and over again until each arch of the neck, curve of the flank and angle in the fetlock is perfect. Horses are all I think about. I draw them, study them, collect all sizes of horse figures.

Mrs. DeAngelis, my sixth-grade teacher, has asked Janine, Stacey, and me to stay after school. She wants to know why every day before school, during recess, after lunch and sometimes even after school, she sees the three of us running around the fields like we're crazy. I don't want to say anything, but she threatens us with detention. So Stacey steps up and tells her about the secret club we formed and how we're practicing real hard to make the next Olympics. Mrs. DeAngelis smiles and says she's very proud of us. Janine and I say nothing, marveling at how easily Stacey can lie.

Our club is not really about the Olympics. We don't talk about it much, but I think it means something different to each one of us. Our club is kind of like a family. A family of horses. And we race because we love to run. We've even made up our own club symbol, which is a large triangle with three small triangles, each small one intersecting one of the three angles of the large triangle. In the center of the large triangle is the letter "A" for Arabians, our club name, and in the center of the small triangles is the initial of each of our secret names. Mine starts with "S" and that is all I can say.

The main focus of the passage is on:

- A. the ways in which most people typically think about horses.
- B. how easy it was for the narrator and her friends to develop an interest in horses.
- C. how hobbies can prevent people from focusing on important aspects of life.
- D. how the narrator and her friends' fascination with horses dominates their lives.

Sequence	Grade	Question type	DOK level	Reporting category	Correct response
1	7	Selected Response	3	Key Ideas and Details	D

This selected-response question requires students to identify the primary focus of the text as a whole (aligns with the Common Core State Standards College and Career Readiness anchor standard [CCRA] R.2). Students must carefully read the entire passage, focusing on key ideas and details in order to identify the main focus of the passage. They must then select the main focus from among answer options that are not all supported by the text.

Correct Response

Answer option D is the only answer option supported by the text (how the narrator and her friends' fascination with horses dominates their lives). The key ideas and details in the text support this focus.

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	7	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.

Question 2

From *The Red Camp*
by Debra Diaz

distance runners. But lately her ankles have been bothering her, and we've been discussing getting them fixed.

The sprinters belong to Janine, who holds the 50-yard dash record and who has calf muscles like small hams. My horses are the middle distancers and I have long, lean legs, strong quick feet and good timing.

Over and over again we race our horses up and down the field, building our strength, increasing our speed and practicing in the winter rain and during the long smoggy summer months.

I guess we are kind of nuts about this, but we do it because we have to. When I'm running, the earth is a part of me. The wind urges me on and the grass springs up below me, lifting me upward and onward. Sometimes I run so fast, I feel I'm galloping on all fours, flying low, **devouring the ground**. When I'm running nothing else matters. The sun, the mist, the smells take over. I disappear.

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As it is used in the passage, the highlighted phrase *devouring the ground* most nearly suggests that the narrator:

- A. is running on all fours like a horse.
- B. imagines that she is grazing like a horse.
- C. is running with great passion and energy.
- D. imagines the ground below her has disappeared.

Sequence	Grade	Question type	DOK level	Reporting category	Correct response
2	7	Selected Response	2	Craft and Structure	C

This selected-response question requires students to determine the meaning of a phrase in context (aligns with CCRA.R.4, L.3–6). Students must read the entire paragraph that contains the highlighted phrase to infer the intended meaning of the phrase.

Correct Response

Answer option C is the only choice that accurately describes the meaning of the highlighted phrase. From the context of the paragraph and the sentence, it is clear that the narrator is running with great passion and energy.

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	7	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

From *The Red Camp*
by Debra Diaz

I draw horses. Over and over and over again until each arch of the neck, curve of the flank and angle in the fetlock is perfect. Horses are all I think about. I draw them, study them, collect all sizes of horse figures.

Mrs. DeAngelis, my sixth-grade teacher, has asked Janine, Stacey, and me to stay after school. She wants to know why every day before school, during recess, after lunch and sometimes even after school, she sees the three of us running around the fields like we're crazy. I don't want to say anything, but she threatens us with detention. So Stacey steps up and tells her about the secret club we formed and how we're practicing real hard to make the next Olympics. Mrs. DeAngelis smiles and says she's very proud of us. Janine and I say nothing, marveling at how easily Stacey can lie.

Our club is not really about the Olympics. We don't talk about it much, but I think it means something different to each one of us. Our club is kind of like a family. A family of horses. And we race because we love to run. We've even made up our own club symbol, which is a large triangle with three small triangles, each small one intersecting one of the three angles of the large triangle. In the center of the large triangle is the letter "A" for Arabians, our

Think about the excerpt from *The Red Camp* as you read the following.

Ivan and Me

My friend Ivan cannot read a note of music. He can't tell a saxophone from a tuba. But, man, can the boy sing! He is what you might call a natural. When Ivan sings, the music just grabs your mind, your heart, your whole body. You are awestruck that such an ordinary-seeming person can produce such an amazing sound.

And that's the basis of our friendship. For Ivan and me, singing is like breathing. It's not merely a passing phase—it's us, it's who we are. And although we seldom talk about it, when we sing together, we both picture ourselves on stage, or maybe in a recording studio. And why not?

I've stopped trying to explain our shared passion. Our other friends think we're a little nuts to be working out harmonies while they're shooting hoops or playing video games. I just figure that when they're standing in line for

Explain how the way the friends in the excerpt from *The Red Camp* share their love of running is similar to the way the friends in "Ivan and Me" share their love of singing. Use a detail from both passages to support your answer.

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Sequence	Grade	Question type	DOK level	Reporting category	Correct response
3	7	Constructed Response	3	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	See scoring guide.

This constructed-response task requires students to make cross-text connections between information and ideas in two texts (aligns with CCRA.R.9). Specifically, this task requires students to determine how the friends in the excerpt from *The Red Camp* share experiences in a way that is similar to how friends in the passage "Ivan and Me" share their experiences. Students must read both texts carefully, compare the information provided in the two texts, and determine how the experiences of these two sets of characters are similar. Students must then construct a written response identifying one similarity in the characters' experiences citing evidence from both texts in support of 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	7	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.

Scoring Guide

Synthesis-Compare

Explain how the way the friends in the excerpt from *The Red Camp* share their love of running is similar to the way the friends in “Ivan and Me” share their love of singing. Use a detail from both passages to support your answer.

Scoring Framework

This Synthesis-Compare task is scored on a 0–3-point scale. A full-credit response includes the following components.

Claim	Evidence
a general explanation of how the way the friends in the excerpt from <i>The Red Camp</i> share their love of running is similar to the way the friends in “Ivan and Me” share their love of singing (1 point)	a detail from the passage that supports the claim (1 point)
	a detail from the excerpt that supports the claim (1 point)

Acceptable Responses

The following chart is not a definitive list of acceptable responses. Other responses will also be included in the anchor papers and practice sets.

Claims	Evidence	
	<i>The Red Camp</i>	“Ivan and Me”
1. Both sets of friends share their love of either singing or running through using their imaginations together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When they run, the girls pretend they are horses. ▪ The girls practice their different running styles by pretending they are horses. ▪ The girls create a racing club based on pretending that they are a family of horses. ▪ Each girl imagines she is a stable of 25 horses, and each horse has a different running style, just like each girl does. ▪ Each girl imagines that she and her horses are one and the same – and that just as each girl runs differently and has different strengths, so do her horses. ▪ When the girls run, they imagine that they are in a horse race. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When Ivan and the narrator sing together, they imagine themselves on stage together. ▪ When Ivan and the narrator sing together, they picture themselves in a recording studio.
2. Both sets of friends share their love of either singing or running through participating in activities of their own design and understood only by them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The girls don't tell their good friend Patty that they truly do feel that they become the horses when they run. ▪ The girls in the racing club have secret names—even the narrator won't reveal hers. ▪ The girls lie to their teacher by telling her they run because they would like to make the Olympics. ▪ The girls cover up by laughing along with Patty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The narrator claims he has stopped trying to tell people about the shared love of singing between him and Ivan, since they don't seem to understand. ▪ The narrator and Ivan have friends who think the two are nuts for preferring singing over basketball or video games. ▪ Regardless of what some friends might think, the narrator is convinced that he and Ivan will become famous singers.

Claims	Evidence	
	<i>The Red Camp</i>	"Ivan and Me"
3. Both sets of friends focus on actually doing their favorite activity together rather than analyzing how they feel about the activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The narrator claims that she and her friends don't talk about their racing club much, even though they race all the time. ▪ The club might mean something different to each girl, but the members don't talk about that. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The narrator states that he and Ivan rarely talk about singing. ▪ The narrator and Ivan feel like singing represents who they are—they don't have to talk about it.

Unacceptable Responses

The following chart is not a definitive list of unacceptable responses. Other responses will also be included in the anchor papers and practice sets.

Claims	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Both sets of friends love a particular activity, either running or singing. ▪ Both sets of friends share their love of either running or singing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The friends in the passages seem to be very close friends.

Scoring Rubric and Guidelines

Score point	Description and example(s)	Notes
3	<p>The answer includes an acceptable claim and two pieces of acceptable evidence.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 1 Both sets of friends share their love of either singing or running through using their imaginations together. The girls create a racing club based on pretending that they are a family of horses. When Ivan and the narrator sing together, they picture themselves in a recording studio.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A claim must be a paraphrased or an interpreted statement. A response may offer a claim as a single statement, or be comprised of several statements that appear in different parts of the response. ▪ A claim and a piece or pieces of evidence can appear in a single statement or sentence. ▪ In many cases, students may offer an insufficient claim. An insufficient claim, on its own, is not creditable. However, an insufficient claim may be creditable if a student offers evidence to complete or clarify the claim.
2	<p>The answer includes an acceptable claim and one piece of acceptable evidence.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 2 Both sets of friends share their love of either singing or running through participating in activities of their own design and understood only by them. The girls lie to their teacher by telling her they run because they would like to make the Olympics.</p> <p>The answer includes two pieces of acceptable evidence.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 3 The girls pretend they are horses. When Ivan and the narrator sing together, they imagine themselves on stage together.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support must relate logically to the claim, or it does not earn credit. ▪ Details include but aren't limited to facts, figures, quotations, paraphrases, and other information and ideas from the passage. ▪ Some students may offer one or more pieces of evidence that support an implied 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 three or more pieces of evidence but no claim is score point 2.

Score point	Description and example(s)	Notes
1	<p>The answer is a single acceptable claim.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 4 Both sets of friends focus on actually <i>doing</i> their favorite activity together rather than analyzing how they feel about the activity.</p> <p>The answer is a piece of acceptable evidence.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 5 The narrator states that he and Ivan rarely talk about singing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accurate claims may be awarded a point, even if no evidence is offered. For this task, the maximum score for a response that offers more than one claim but no evidence is score point 1. ▪ Responses do not have to be in complete sentences or paragraphs. Even a one- or two-word response can receive a point. ▪ If a response gives the same answer or support twice using different words, it only earns one point.
0	<p>The answer shows effort but offers neither an acceptable claim, nor acceptable pieces of evidence.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 7 Both sets of friends share their love of either running or singing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extraneous material in a response, as long as it doesn't contradict the appropriate response, is not taken into consideration when assigning a score.