



Grade 7

FAST ELA Reading

Sample Test Materials

The purpose of these sample test materials is to orient teachers and students to the types of paper-based FAST ELA Reading questions. By using these materials, students will become familiar with the types of items and response formats they may see on a paper-based test. The sample items and answers are not intended to demonstrate the length of the actual test, nor should student responses be used as an indicator of student performance on the actual test. The sample test materials are not intended to guide classroom instruction.

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Read the passage “What Do Animals Dream About? Peek Inside the Minds of Sleeping Animals.” and then answer Numbers 1 through 7.

What Do Animals Dream About? Peek Inside the Minds of Sleeping Animals.

by Mary Bates

- 1 Your dog whimpers in his sleep. Your cat twitches. It definitely looks like your pet is dreaming. We can’t ask them about it, but scientific evidence—based on similarities in our brains and behavior while sleeping—seems to indicate that animals do dream, just like us. But what are they dreaming about? Scientists are looking at sleeping cats, rats, and even bees to find out what really goes on when they snooze.
- 2 In people, the most vivid dreams happen when we experience rapid eye movement, or REM, sleep. During this time, our muscles are normally paralyzed so we don’t act out our dreams, but our brains can be even more active than they are when we’re awake.
- 3 All mammals and some birds also experience REM sleep. Other creatures, like reptiles and some insects, might go through REM sleep—or something resembling it.
- 4 “They probably don’t have the rich narrative dreams that we experience, but it seems reasonable to think that animals have images and some form of thinking during REM sleep,” says Patrick McNamara, a neuroscientist at Boston University. . . .

Rat Slumber

- 5 For laboratory rats, dreams may take the form of replaying the fastest route through a maze to a tasty piece of food. Matthew Wilson, a neuroscientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and his colleagues compared the brain patterns of rats running through a maze with their brain activity during sleep afterward.
- 6 “It’s like going down the halls in your school or the different rooms of your house,” says Wilson. “The rats can follow different paths to get to a food reward, so there’s some incentive for them to explore.”

7 Wilson and his colleagues looked at an area of the brain called the hippocampus. Cells in this area activate in ways that correspond to a rat's locations in space. The rats' movements create new patterns of activity in the hippocampus. The researchers could tell where an awake rat was in the maze by the pattern of activity in its hippocampus.

8 When Wilson and his colleagues looked at the activity of the same nerve cells while the rats slept, they found nearly identical patterns of activity. It was as if the rats were running the maze in their minds while they slept. The brain patterns were so similar that the researchers could tell what part of the maze the rats were dreaming of.

9 "The rats seem to be traveling back in time, revisiting places they have been," says Wilson. "Their dreams take the form of these short snippets of experience, like little movies." . . .

Insects and Other Creatures

10 Animals such as rats, cats, and finches have brains that are like our own and show similar behavior during sleep. But what about more distantly related animals? How can we tell if they are dreaming?

11 "Of the nearly one million described species of insect on the planet, only a handful have been studied with respect to sleep," says Barrett Klein, a biologist at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

12 Measuring sleep in insects is tricky. Scientists have generally focused on a group of behavioral signs of sleep, such as stillness, drooping, and muscle relaxation. Sleeping bugs also require intense stimulus to jar them into responding. Experiments show that some insects experience sleep rebound, which means that if deprived of sleep, they will subsequently need more of it.

13 Going without sleep has serious consequences for people. Insects can also suffer from lack of shut-eye. Klein investigated how sleep deprivation affects honeybee communication. Bees tell each other about the direction and distance to food sources with something called a waggle dance. Klein found that the dances of sleep-deprived bees are sloppier than those of bees that slept soundly. . . .

- 14 Klein says no one is sure if insects like bees dream, but there is great potential. "In my experience, there is no reason why an insect would not or could not do something comparable to human dreaming," he says. "If they can process odors and replay information while they sleep, that's what dreams are made of. If you watch a sleeping bee, there are titillating hints that she might be processing something. I've seen bees twitch their antennae and extend their tongue-like mouthparts during sleep. Are they dreaming about lapping up nectar from a flower?"
- 15 Recent research suggests dreaming may be more common in the animal kingdom than previously thought.
- 16 For instance, cuttlefish, relatives of the octopus, demonstrate a sleep-like state similar to REM sleep in which their eyes move rapidly, their arms twitch, and their bodies change color. And scientists observed something comparable to REM sleep in a lizard called a bearded dragon.

To Sleep, Perchance to . . . Understand You're Dreaming?

- 17 While the behavioral and biological evidence that other animals dream continues to grow, what that actually means remains elusive. We do not know what dreaming is like for animals or if they know that they are dreaming. People do not often realize they are dreaming while asleep, but it usually becomes clear as soon as we wake up. . . . Do rats wake up remembering the mazes they ran while they dozed? Do cats recognize their dreams of stalking prey as dreams and not reality?
- 18 We can say with reasonable certainty that other animals dream. But how animals experience those dreams is a mystery—for now.

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FAST ELA Reading Sample Items

Now answer Numbers 1 through 7. Base your answers on the passage “What Do Animals Dream About? Peek Inside the Minds of Sleeping Animals.”

1. Read this sentence from the passage.

“The rats seem to be traveling back in time, revisiting places they have been,” says Wilson.” (paragraph 9)

How does the phrase “traveling back in time” contribute to the tone of the paragraph?

- Ⓐ by showing concern about rats’ dreams
- Ⓑ by showing uncertainty about rats’ dreams
- Ⓒ by creating a sense of wonder about rats’ dreams
- Ⓓ by creating a sense of longing about rats’ dreams

FAST ELA Reading Sample Items

2. Fill in the bubble to select the word from paragraph 12 which comes from a Latin word meaning “an object used to spur or cause a reaction.”

12 Measuring sleep in insects is tricky. Scientists have generally
Ⓐ focused on a group of behavioral signs of sleep, such as stillness,
drooping, and muscle Ⓑ relaxation. Sleeping bugs also require
intense Ⓒ stimulus to jar them into responding. Experiments show
that some insects experience sleep Ⓓ rebound, which means that if
deprived of sleep, they will Ⓔ subsequently need more of it.

FAST ELA Reading Sample Items

3. Select **two** statements that describe the significance of the rhetorical question at the end of paragraph 14.
- Ⓐ Klein is calling for further studies on the subject.
 - Ⓑ Klein is challenging an accepted notion about bees.
 - Ⓒ Klein is using his research to make an educated guess.
 - Ⓓ Klein is encouraging the reader to think about bee dreams.
 - Ⓔ Klein is persuading the reader to ask new questions about bees.

4. How does beginning the sentence with the phrase “recent research” help achieve the author’s purpose in paragraph 15?
- Ⓐ It provides background on dream studies.
 - Ⓑ It contrasts different types of animal dreams.
 - Ⓒ It introduces major questions for future exploration.
 - Ⓓ It emphasizes the idea that new facts have been accepted.

FAST ELA Reading Sample Items

5. This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

In the section **Insects and Other Creatures**, how does the author develop the argument that insects probably dream?

- Ⓐ by citing an expert in insect sleep
- Ⓑ by making guesses about insect sleep
- Ⓒ by providing an opinion about insect sleep
- Ⓓ by comparing insect sleep and human sleep

Part B

Which detail from the passage supports the answer in Part A?

- Ⓐ "Sleeping bugs also require intense stimulus to jar them into responding." (paragraph 12)
- Ⓑ "Going without sleep has serious consequences for people." (paragraph 13)
- Ⓒ "Bees tell each other about the direction and distance to food sources with something called a waggle dance." (paragraph 13)
- Ⓓ "If they can process odors and replay information while they sleep . . ."

6. This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

What is the purpose of the section titled **To Sleep, Perchance to . . . Understand You're Dreaming?**

- Ⓐ to explain how dreaming affects living things when they awaken
- Ⓑ to emphasize the limits of current information about animal sleep
- Ⓒ to present the facts that scientists know about how other species sleep
- Ⓓ to question if people can determine the difference between dreams and reality

Part B

Which sentence from the section supports the answer in Part A?

- Ⓐ "People do not often realize they are dreaming while asleep, but it usually becomes clear as soon as we wake up." (paragraph 17)
- Ⓑ "Do cats recognize their dreams of stalking prey as dreams and not reality?" (paragraph 17)
- Ⓒ "We can say with reasonable certainty that other animals dream." (paragraph 18)
- Ⓓ "But how animals experience those dreams is a mystery—for now." (paragraph 18)

FAST ELA Reading Sample Items

7. Fill in the bubbles to show whether each detail supports the first central idea, the second central idea, or both central ideas of the passage.

	Some animals dream in a way similar to humans.	It is difficult to know what dreaming is like for animals.	Both Central Ideas
“We can’t ask them about it, but scientific evidence—based on similarities in our brains and behavior while sleeping—seems to indicate that animals do dream, just like us.” (paragraph 1)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
“All mammals and some birds also experience REM sleep.” (paragraph 3)	Ⓓ	Ⓔ	Ⓕ
“While the behavioral and biological evidence that other animals dream continues to grow, what that actually means remains elusive.” (paragraph 17)	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓖ

Read the passage “Mornings” and then answer Numbers 8 through 14.

Mornings

- 1 I slouch against a locker, my fingers drumming against the cool metal. It’s too quiet here in the morning. Before the first buses arrive, the hallways are silent. Mrs. Lahri’s door is still locked, the room behind it dark. Squinting through the glass, I can make out the symbols on her whiteboard: a sneering curlicue, a bloated dot. It’s a wonder that those symbols make up a language of sorts, though of course they mock me.
- 2 I hear the click clack of heels, and I straighten up on instinct for a second before remembering myself and turning away. The bell hasn’t rung. Class hasn’t started yet.
- 3 Mrs. Lahri turns the corner and I hear her breathe in, surprised. I don’t look up, fiddling with a sticker on a locker that isn’t mine.
- 4 “Danny,” she says. “Good morning! I’m . . . surprised to see you here. Do you need something?” The cheer she injects into her voice sounds forced. I tend to get off on the wrong foot with people. It’s nothing I do, of course. I finally look up, my expression blank.
- 5 “My dad dropped me off on his way to work. I’m just wandering around until the bell rings,” I say.
- 6 “School doesn’t start for another hour,” she says, almost to herself. I watch her eyes flick from me to her door. What? Am I throwing off her morning routine? Does she think I’m here for an impromptu tutoring session? No chance of that. I’m a natural with instruments, or would be, if I bothered to try. She finally tugs a lanyard out from under her jacket and unlocks the door. “Well, come on in then,” she says.
- 7 “I’m good.” I say, tilting up my chin. “I’ve got my phone.”
- 8 I stay in the hallway. Classrooms make me claustrophobic. Maybe it’s the smell—anxiety, sweat, and sickly-sweet bubble gum. Or it’s the feel of those metal chairs, trapping you under the desks as effectively as a toe in a glue trap.
- 9 There is a buzz as she turns on her computer, and then—the gentle thud as she props up the lid of the baby grand. I hold my phone up to my face so I can glance around it and see the ridiculous sight. What teacher brings her own grand piano to school? The music teacher before used the same scratched wooden thing as the teacher before that, probably back from when the school was first built. But no, not Mrs. Lahri, too fancy for the rest of us.

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- 10 I remember walking into her class on the first day of school, feeling confused while everyone oohed and ahed. I slunk to the back of the room and glared at the black and white monstrosity. It was so out of place, like a tuxedo in a room full of sweatshirts. The old music teacher used to let me roll my knuckles against the black keys of the old piano sometimes. I'd coax the sound out over the dull thud of each key, avoiding the clang of the broken note near the middle of the board. But this new piano belonged on a stage somewhere, in a concert hall, far away from me. I didn't want to look at it, let alone touch it.
- 11 To my annoyance, I found the door locked whenever she wasn't there. At lunch? Door closed. After school? Shut down. And now, in the morning? Still locked. It's like she thinks someone's going to go in and breathe on the strings.
- 12 I shift my weight impatiently, sliding to the left a bit so she can't see me from the door. And . . . there. As soon as she thinks I'm gone, the music starts.
- 13 It's a little riff at first, so lonely sounding that something aches in the back of my throat. Then her other hand comes down. The music builds and builds, swelling into a wave. I close my eyes and let the hallway fall away. People call it the blues, but I see other colors. In my mind, they push the gray away like wind against a pile of leaves. The sky spirals up, and I am breathless, my heart racing along to the beat.
- 14 Suddenly, a blaring noise jolts my eyes open. It's the bell, obnoxiously drowning it all out. Other kids start pouring in through the doors. Laughing, shoving, talking in too-loud voices. I glance up at the clock mounted on the wall. How did time pass that fast?
- 15 Mrs. Lahri is at the door now. Her gaze stops on me and she gives me an understanding look. I shrink back from it.
- 16 "Jazz quartet meets on Tuesday mornings, if you want to—" she begins.
- 17 Landon calls my name from down the hall, and I push away from the locker. I shake my head like a dog shaking off water and fall into the flow of kids.
- 18 "You're here early. What did you do, get detention?" he asks. I just shrug. Landon glances back at the music room. "Mrs. Lahri keeps staring at you. Leave your trumpet at school over the weekend again?"

FAST ELA Reading Sample Items

- 19 “Good thing I don’t have her class until tomorrow, so I don’t have to deal with that.” I say, laughing. I don’t look back. Not once. But now I know about mornings. And I tuck that secret in my back pocket, where no one can hear it but me.

“Mornings” written for educational purposes.

FAST ELA Reading Sample Items

Now answer Numbers 8 through 14. Base your answers on the passage “Mornings.”

8. Read this sentence from paragraph 6.

“Does she think I’m here for an impromptu tutoring session?”

What does impromptu mean in this sentence?

- Ⓐ inspiring
- Ⓑ substitute
- Ⓒ tiresome
- Ⓓ unplanned

9. Read these sentences from the passage.

“I slunk to the back of the room and glared at the black and white monstrosity. It was so out of place, like a tuxedo in a room full of sweatshirts.” (paragraph 10)

What does this description reveal about the narrator’s view of Mrs. Lahri’s piano?

- Ⓐ Mrs. Lahri is showing off her wealth, making him feel bad.
- Ⓑ Mrs. Lahri should not have brought it, as it stands out in school.
- Ⓒ He should be dressed up to play it, because the piano is so beautiful.
- Ⓓ He is fascinated with the piano, but he does not feel worthy to play it yet.

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- 10.** In paragraph 13, what does the narrator mean when he describes the music as “swelling into a wave”?
- Ⓐ It crashes all at once.
 - Ⓑ It makes him want to cry.
 - Ⓒ It is muted by the locked door.
 - Ⓓ It becomes something powerful.

11. Read the sentence from paragraph 19.

“And I tuck that secret in my back pocket, where no one can hear it but me.”

What does this sentence show about the narrator’s feelings about the music he hears?

- Ⓐ He is ashamed of it.
- Ⓑ He believes it is special.
- Ⓒ He does not understand it.
- Ⓓ He wants to share it with others.

FAST ELA Reading Sample Items

12. This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

Which of the narrator's claims in the passage is unreliable?

- Ⓐ He has trouble reading musical notes.
- Ⓑ He has no interest in the grand piano.
- Ⓒ He does not like some aspects of classrooms.
- Ⓓ His father has dropped him off at school early.

Part B

Which sentence from the passage shows that the claim in Part A is unreliable?

- Ⓐ "Before the first buses arrive, the hallways are silent." (paragraph 1)
- Ⓑ "Or it's the feel of those metal chairs, trapping you under the desks as effectively as a toe in a glue trap." (paragraph 8)
- Ⓒ "I close my eyes and let the hallway fall away." (paragraph 13)
- Ⓓ "'Leave your trumpet at school over the weekend again?'" (paragraph 18)

FAST ELA Reading Sample Items

13. Fill in the bubbles by matching the text evidence from the passage to the truth it reveals about the narrator.

	Music has the ability to transport the narrator from reality.	The narrator lacks a formal understanding of music.	It suggests the narrator's interest in the piano.
"It's a wonder that those symbols make up a language of sorts, though of course they mock me." (paragraph 1)	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
"To my annoyance, I found the door locked whenever she wasn't there. At lunch? Door closed. After school? Shut down. And now, in the morning? Still locked." (paragraph 11)	Ⓓ	Ⓔ	Ⓕ
"Suddenly, a blaring noise jolts my eyes open. It's the bell, obnoxiously drowning it all out." (paragraph 14)	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓖ

FAST ELA Reading Sample Items

14. What are **two** different themes of the story?

- Ⓐ Music can create powerful moments.
- Ⓑ One good teacher can change a child's life.
- Ⓒ Music should be a part of every child's education.
- Ⓓ Practice is more important to success than passion.
- Ⓔ Actions reveal more about people than their words.



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