FCAT Sample Test Materials

These sample test materials are designed to help you prepare to answer FCAT questions. These materials introduce you to the kinds of questions you will answer when you take FCAT and include hints for responding to the different kinds of questions. The FCAT reading sample test materials for Grade 8 are composed of the books described below:

✓ Sample Test and Answer Book
   Includes sample reading passages, a sample test, a sample answer book, and instructions for completing the sample test. (Copies are available for all students in the tested grade.)

☐ Sample Answer Key
   Includes answers and explanations for the questions in the sample test. (Copies are available for classroom teachers only.)

✓ = This book

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Hints for Taking the FCAT Reading Test

Here are some hints to help you do your best when you take the FCAT reading test. Keep these hints in mind when you answer the sample questions.

✓ Learn how to answer each kind of question. FCAT reading tests have three types of questions: multiple-choice, short-response, and extended-response.

✓ Read the directions carefully. Ask your teacher to explain any directions you do not understand.

✓ Read the passages and questions very carefully. You may look back at a passage as often as you like.

✓ Answer the questions you are sure about first. If a question seems too difficult, skip it and go back to it later.

✓ Be sure to fill in the answer bubbles correctly. Do not make any stray marks around answer spaces.

✓ Think positively. Some questions may seem hard, but others will be easy.

✓ Check each answer to make sure it is the best answer for the question asked.

How to Answer the “Read, Think, and Explain” Questions

Answers to the short- and extended-response questions can receive full or partial credit. You should try to answer these questions even if you are not sure of the correct answer. If a portion of the answer is correct, you will get a portion of the points.

✓ Allow about 5 minutes to answer the short “Read, Think, and Explain” questions and about 10 to 15 minutes to answer the long ones.

✓ Read the question carefully.

✓ If you do not understand the question, go back and review the passage.

✓ Think carefully and organize your thoughts before starting to write the answers.

✓ Write your answer on the lines provided in the Answer Book.

✓ Remember to include details and information from the passage in your answer.

✓ Use clear, concise language to explain your answer.

✓ Be sure to answer every part of the question.

✓ Reread the answer to make sure it says what you want it to say.

Directions for Taking the Reading Sample Test

This book contains three reading passages, 16 sample questions, and a Sample Answer Book. It should take about 30 to 45 minutes to read the passages and answer all the questions. You will mark your answers in the Sample Answer Book, which begins on page 13. If you don’t understand a question, just ask your teacher to explain it to you. Your teacher has the answers to the sample test questions.

Before you begin, remove the Sample Answer Book by tearing along the dotted line.
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After you have read each passage, read the questions and then answer them in the Sample Answer Book.

This symbol appears next to questions that require short written answers. Use about 5 minutes to answer each of these questions.
A complete and correct answer to each of these questions is worth 2 points. A partially correct answer is worth 1 point.

This symbol appears next to questions that require longer written answers. Use about 10 to 15 minutes to answer each of these questions.
A complete and correct answer to each of these questions is worth 4 points. A partially correct answer is worth 1, 2, or 3 points.
Read the story “The Makings of a Star” before answering Numbers 1 through 8 in the Sample Answer Book.

THE MAKINGS OF A STAR

by L. HALL

I’m going to be a star, I know it. I’m not sure quite how, but I have lots of time to figure that out. Maybe I’ll be an actor, or a baseball player. Or I’ll play basketball; I just need time to decide.

At school, my teacher shakes her head over my homework. “Garrett, this handwriting is terrible. How do you expect anyone to read it? What are you going to do when you have a job and your boss can’t read your writing?”

Not a problem. “I’m going to be my own boss,” I say, tossing a crumpled paper into the wastebasket. “I’ll be able to hire secretaries to type everything for me.” The class laughs; the teacher smiles and shakes her head again. The ball of paper sails in smooth. In my mind, the crowds go wild.

When I come home from school, my mother tells me to do my chores. I say, “Why should I? One day I’ll be able to hire someone to do everything for me—not just type, but all my chores, too.”

“Until then, it’s your job to vacuum,” says my mom. “And don’t forget to take out the trash.”

While the vacuum rolls over the vast brown carpet in the living room, I imagine the roars of the crowd, the unending cheers, the thunderous applause. Oh, it’ll happen; I’m sure of it. I’ll drive through
the streets in a bright red convertible, leading a parade. A band will march behind me, while people crowd the street in order to get a look at me, a hometown boy who made it big. So big an armored car follows me wherever I go, full of cash for me to spend. I reach into a bag on the seat next to me and toss handfuls of cash into the crowds of people. The cheers are deafening. I stop the car, stand up right there in the driver’s seat and take a bow.

“All right, Mr. Big,” says my mother from the hallway. “Furniture is for sitting on, not standing on.”

I scramble down from the armchair and finish vacuuming. I hear my mother’s footsteps down the wooden floor of the hallway. When I’m sure she’s gone, I climb up for one last bow.

After I put the vacuum cleaner away in the hall closet, I grab the trash bag from the kitchen and take it out to the cans by the garage. I wave at our neighbor, Mr. Rodriguez, who’s outside working on his car. He straightens up, wiping the grease from his hands with a red rag.

“Let me give you a piece of advice,” says Mr. Rodriguez. “I know you’re at that age when you think getting a car is the best thing in the world. Believe me when I tell you it’s not all that it’s cracked up to be.”

Mr. Rodriguez says this every time he works on his car. “Yeah, right,” I say, dragging the cans out to the curb for pick-up the next morning. “I’m getting a car as soon as I get my license.”

“Listen, cars are nothing but pain and heartache. Take it from me, I know. You have payments. You have insurance to pay. And then the work! Oil changes, tune-ups, radiator hoses—there’s no end to it.” He looks at his car with disgust. “A bus, now there’s convenience: no payments, no insurance, no getting your hands all greasy.”

Whoever heard of a star riding the bus? I’ll be cruising in a car the day I turn sixteen. “Forget it,” I tell Mr. Rodriguez, who has once again disappeared under the hood of his car.
His muffled voice echoes from under the hood. “You’ll be sorry.”
Not likely, I think as I walk up the driveway and into the house. I imagine myself behind the wheel of that red convertible; once again, I am surrounded by adoring fans. “We love you, Garrett!” There are screams and yells and cheers.
At dinner, my mother reminds me to do my homework.
“One day I won’t have to do any homework ever again,” I say. I imagine three or four secretaries and assistants following me around, carrying clipboards and calendars and schedules and calculators and portable telephones.
“I’m glad to hear it,” says my father dryly.
He’ll be sorry when I’m famous. I’ll call him from my car telephone while I’m heading down the highway in my beautiful convertible.
“Garrett!” My mom’s voice interrupts my reverie.
“What?” I can’t hear her very well; it must be the noise from the V-8 engine.
“If you’re not going to eat your dinner roll, leave it on your plate.”
I realize I’m holding the roll against my ear. I put it back on the plate.
“He’s been so absent-minded,” says my mother to my father, as if I weren’t even there.
“Maybe the growing pains have affected his brain,” says my father, and they both laugh while I excuse myself from the table.
I wonder if every star had to put up with this.
Turn to page 14 in the Sample Answer Book. Answer Numbers 1 through 8. Base your answers on the story “The Makings of a Star.”

1. What is the author’s purpose in writing this story?
   A. to encourage the reader to achieve fame and fortune
   B. to demonstrate to the reader the effects of growing pains
   C. to entertain the reader with an amusing story about a teenager
   D. to prove to the reader that an adult knows more than a teenager

2. What is Garrett’s main goal in life?
   F. to achieve fame in athletics
   G. to be important and admired
   H. to have secretaries and assistants
   I. to own a convertible and a car telephone

3. Why is Garrett so absent-minded?
   A. His imagination carries him away.
   B. His laziness keeps him from concentrating.
   C. His parents put too much pressure on him to do his chores.
   D. His teachers make him spend too much time on schoolwork.

4. Which sentence best characterizes Garrett’s attitude toward chores and homework?
   F. Chores are more important than homework.
   G. He should be paid for chores and homework.
   H. Homework and chores will not matter when he is famous.
   I. There is not enough time to do both chores and homework.
Read these sentences from the story.

The class laughs; the teacher smiles and shakes her head again. The ball of paper sails in smooth. In my mind, the crowds go wild.

How does this quotation reveal Garrett’s nature and future plans? Use details and information from the story to support your answer.

Garrett holds the dinner roll to his ear to

A. act like a clown.
B. annoy his parents.
C. pretend it is a car telephone.
D. block out his mother’s voice.

The author wants the reader to think that Garrett

F. is lazy by nature.
G. is a poor student.
H. has a bright future.
I. has a vivid imagination.

How do the adults’ comments to Garrett contribute to the development of the story? Use details and information from the story to support your answer.
Read the articles "Stop That Car!" and "Electronic Eyes" before answering Numbers 9 through 16 in the Sample Answer Book.

Stop That Car!

A getaway car speeds through traffic, with police hot in pursuit. Ahead, there’s a barrier of parked cruisers. Dozens of officers stand by with weapons pointed at the oncoming car. The car might stop—or it might try to ram the police cars.

That has been the usual way to end a high-speed chase. But now there’s a safer and easier method.

The Anti-Vehicle Electronic Counter-Measures, or AVECM, is a 42-inch, electrode-packed plastic pancake disguised as a road patch. As the speeding car passes over the AVECM, electrical charges zap the vehicle’s engine controls. The unit disables the car’s electrical system. It stops dead and can’t restart.

"[Police] needed something they could operate by remote control from the dashboard of an officer’s car," says Dave Pacholok, inventor of the AVECM.

Another unit in development launches an AVECM unit from under the front bumper of a police car. It fires up to 100 feet and slides underneath the car being chased.

Developers are making arrangements with the Los Angeles and Houston police departments to use the AVECM. Other cities might be on the way.

Electronic Eyes

Finding your way inside a burning building is like trying to walk in the dark. Firefighters have to inch along the floor of smoke-filled rooms, touching a wall so they don’t lose their way.

Now a gadget called CairnsIRIS helps them find their way through the smoke more easily and locate victims inside.

CairnsIRIS is a miniature television system that fits on a firefighter’s helmet. It uses a small, infrared camera that attaches to the side and a flip-down display that fits over the eyes. All this is powered by a belt pack the size of a small book.

The camera "sees" by sensing differences in temperature as small as half a degree. By watching the black-and-white image, firefighters can spot people who might be partially hidden behind furniture.

"Picture resolution is so good that you can tell whether a person is wearing glasses, whether they’re bald, or even what kind of underwear they have," says Joe Kosiarzki of Cairns & Brother, the company that developed the system.

Most important, this device can detect unseen dangers—fires inside walls, ceilings, or floors. Firefighters can know for sure how a fire is spreading and when they’ve really put it out.

Several fire departments and rescue squads use IRIS to help save lives, including departments in Atlanta, Ga.; Duluth, Minn.; and Fort Polk, La. It’s also used in England and Sweden.

Turn to page 16 in the Sample Answer Book. Answer Numbers 9 through 16. Base your answers on the articles “Stop That Car!” and “Electronic Eyes.”

9 Why did the author begin the article “Stop That Car!” with a description of a high-speed chase? Support your answer with details and information from the article.

10 The author’s main point about AVECMs is that they
   A. provide an alternative to roadblocks.
   B. offer a safer method to catch suspects.
   C. can form an electrical barrier to stop cars.
   D. may be used to eliminate high-speed chases.

11 How are the two types of AVECM units different?
   F. One rests on the ground; the other shoots from a police car.
   G. One alerts the police; the other alerts the neighborhood watch.
   H. One punctures the vehicle’s tires; the other stops it electronically.
   I. One stops the car; the other locates it on the police station’s map.
Look at the diagram below. The arrows indicate the direction in which each car is going.

Which police car is in the best position to launch an AVEC unit at the suspect’s car? Support your answer with details and information from the article.

The letters “IR” in IRIS probably stand for

- A. infrared.
- B. infrasound.
- C. iris.
- D. irradiate.
14 What part of the CairnsIRIS assists a firefighter in rescuing concealed victims in a burning building?
   
   F. sensors that detect lifeforms
   G. sensors that gauge light intensity
   H. infrared “eyes” that detect movement
   I. infrared “eyes” that sense temperature

15 Which statement is the weakest argument for using CairnsIRIS?
   
   A. Firefighters may be at risk without it.
   B. It is being used by several fire departments.
   C. The device can detect many unseen dangers.
   D. This technology helps locate unconscious victims.

16 What is the author’s purpose in writing “Stop That Car!” and “Electronic Eyes”?
   
   F. to warn the reader about dangers that exist
   G. to inform the reader about new and safer technology
   H. to entertain the reader by describing frightening situations
   I. to encourage the reader to become a police officer or a firefighter

This is the end of the Reading Sample Test.
Until time is called, go back and check your work or answer questions you did not complete. When you have finished, close your Reading Test and Sample Answer Book.
Answer all the questions that appear in the Sample Test in this answer book. Answer multiple-choice questions by filling in the bubble for the answer you select. Write your answers to "Read, Think, and Explain" questions on the lines provided.

To remove your Sample Answer Book, carefully tear along the dotted line.
Now turn to page 7 in your Reading Sample Test.
This is the end of the Reading Answer Book. Until time is called, go back and check your work or answer questions you did not complete. When you have finished, close your Reading Test and Sample Answer Book.