



ISA
Reading
Sample Materials

Grade 5

Grade 6

Grade 7

Sample

ISA Reading Sample Materials

Grade 5, Grade 6 and Grade 7

This collection of reading sample materials represents a typical range of reading material in ISA tests from Grade 5 to Grade 7. The purpose of this collection is to show teachers examples of the kinds of reading materials and questions that are used in the ISA.

Stimulus material

This collection has four pieces of stimulus material:

- a narrative extract;
- a table;
- an argument; and
- a set of instructions.

An actual ISA reading test has six or seven pieces of stimulus from a range of text types that also includes poems, descriptions, charts, graphs, expositions and diagrams. This collection has three questions per stimulus. An actual ISA reading test has four or five questions per stimulus. An ISA reading test for Grades 5 to 7 has approximately 32 questions.

Reading aspect

There are 12 questions in this collection:

- 3 assess *retrieving information*;
- 6 assess *interpreting texts*; and
- 3 assess *reflecting on texts*

In an actual ISA test, the proportion of questions assessing each of the three aspects of reading would be similar to the proportion shown here. The reading aspect for each question is shown in the marking guide.

Question format

This collection has 6 multiple-choice questions and 6 open-ended questions requiring students to write a response. An actual ISA test has a similar proportion of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Some of the open-ended questions only require an answer of one or two words, others require a sentence or two. Examples of both kinds of open-ended questions are included. The marking guide shows how the open-ended questions are scored.

This collection of materials is not a test.

The materials in this collection have NOT been selected to represent the typical range of difficulty of an ISA test. An actual ISA test is carefully constructed to ensure that the range of difficulty of the questions reflects the range of reading ability of the population for each grade.

The materials in this collection cover Grades 5, 6 and 7. Some materials may be too hard for Grade 5 and some materials may be too easy for Grade 7. If a teacher wants to use some of these materials for students to practise on, it is important that the teacher only selects the stimulus pieces that are of an appropriate level of reading difficulty for their students.

Teachers should use this material as a model. Teachers can develop questions that assess similar kinds of skills using their own reading materials.

Other ISA Sample Reading Collections

- Grades 3, 4 and 5
- Grades 7, 8, 9 and 10

Spring Dragon

'Good morning, Grandfather.'

'Ah... Tan Yali. You are awake. Do you know what tomorrow is?'

'Yes, Grandfather. Spring Dragon Day.'

Grandfather sat heavily on his chair and helped himself to a ladle of rice porridge. Wisps of steam curled upwards from his bowl.

'Tomorrow,' began Grandfather, 'is the day dragons raise their heads. When they wake from hibernation, they begin to growl and shake their tails, causing thunderclaps.'

Tan Yali's mother cleared her throat.

'What do dragons look like?' asked Tan Yali.

Every year he asked this question, and every year Grandfather answered it as though it was the first time.

'The dragon has the body of a snake, antlers of a deer, talons of an eagle and the face of a horse.'

'Father,' interrupted Tan Yali's mother, 'you know dragons are a myth from the old days. You should not fill the boy's head with such nonsense. It would be better to help him with his lessons.'

Grandfather bowed his head and slurped his porridge. Tan Yali tried not to grin. He knew his mother hated it when Grandfather slurped. And he suspected Grandfather did it for that very reason.

Spring Dragon

SPRING DRAGON on the opposite page is from a novel.
Use *SPRING DRAGON* to answer the questions below.

R05170

1

Grandfather says that when dragons shake their tails

- spring begins.
- it is time for them to sleep.
- you hear thunder.
- the dragons start fighting.

R051704

2

Why does Tan Yali think Grandfather slurps his porridge?

R051707

3

Why does Tan Yali's mother 'clear her throat'?

- She is trying not to laugh at the story.
- She does not approve of Grandfather telling the story.
- She has noticed a mistake in the story.
- She is worried that Tan Yali will be frightened by the story.

Extreme Phenomena

Record	Description	Place	Time
Driest Place	0.1 centimetres (0.04 inch) of rain per year	Atacama Desert, Chile	–
Wettest Place	12 metres (472 inches) of rain per year	Mawsynram, India	–
Lowest Temperature	-89.2 °C (-128.6 °F)	Vostok, Antarctica	1983
Highest Temperature	57.7 °C (135.9 °F)	Al'Aziziyah, Libya	1922
Longest Period of Sunshine	768 consecutive days	Florida, USA	1967–1969
Cloudiest Place	736 hours of sunshine per year	Ben Nevis, Scotland	–

Extreme Phenomena

The table on the opposite page, *EXTREME PHENOMENA*, is from a book about the weather.

Use *EXTREME PHENOMENA* to answer the questions below.

R050901

4

In which year was the coldest temperature recorded?

- 1922
- 1967
- 1969
- 1983

R050903

5

What is this table about?

- recent weather around the world
- changing weather patterns
- unusual weather conditions
- early weather records

R050907

6

What does the table tell us about Florida?

- It is a very hot place.
- It is a very sunny place.
- It is a very dry place.
- It is a very high place.

Letter to the Editor

Peter Hildegard (in his letter of 15 May) has got it wrong. I did not spend the years I attended a mainstream school sitting on the sidelines 'feeling deprived and lonely' because I use a wheelchair while my fellow students 'engaged in boisterous playground activities'.

Instead I participated in all the activities available to me, both academically and socially. I learned about the world and how to engage in it, formed friendships and was aware that I had a right to expect the same opportunities as those that were available to my fellow non-disabled students. Through daily contact with a disabled student my peers also learned important lessons about diversity and acceptance.

We belong in the world. It is our world too. We share, with non-disabled people, the right to live in the community, attend regular schools, use the public transport system and so forth. Unfortunately for us, there remain access and attitudinal problems that prevent or restrict our participation, and this needs to change. This is everyone's responsibility.

Melissa Burgon

Letter to the Editor

Use *LETTER TO THE EDITOR* on the opposite page to answer the questions below.

L7LML3

7

'feeling deprived and lonely'
'engaged in boisterous playground activities'.

Why does Melissa place quotation marks (' ') around these words in her letter?

L7LML5

8

Melissa calls others 'non-disabled' rather than 'abled'.
What point is she trying to make?

L7LML7

9

The last paragraph begins with, 'We belong in this world'.
Who are 'we'?

Conservation of Mass

Young children usually refer to the mass of an object as the amount or weight of the objects. Conservation of mass is the understanding that changing the shape of an object does not change the mass of an object. Jean Piaget was a Swiss psychologist, was the first person to research and document the development of children's ability to conserve mass. He found that children typically develop the ability to conserve mass around the age of seven.

Research Activity

An investigation of young people's thinking

Equipment Required:

1 block of soft modelling clay that is approximately the size of two fists

Pen and paper for recording the results

Procedure:

1. Place two chairs at a table. Put the equipment on the table within easy reach.
2. Sit next to the child at the table. Make sure the child is relaxed and comfortable. If you do not know the child well then take some time to chat and ensure that the child feels at ease.
3. When you feel that the child is ready to begin, take the modelling clay and ask the child to divide it into two equal parts. When the child has done this, confirm with her that she is happy that the amount of clay in each half is the same*. If the child says that the two parts are not the 'same' then ask her to redistribute the clay until she is sure that the two parts have the same amount of clay.
4. Take the two parts of clay and roll each of them into a ball. Confirm that the child still believes that the two parts contain equal amounts of clay.
5. Roll one of the balls of clay into a sausage shape. Place the two pieces of clay next to each other and ask the child whether there is the same amount of clay in each part. If she answers 'yes' then ask her to explain why she thinks that there is the same amount in each. If she says 'no' then ask her to say which one has 'more' clay and then ask her to explain why she thinks that one has 'more'. Carefully make notes of the exact words of her explanation. Make sure that you praise the child and allow her to feel as though she has done well regardless of her response and explanation.
6. Roll the sausage shaped piece of clay back into a ball. Ask the child whether she thinks that there is the same amount of clay in each ball and allow her to adjust the amounts as in step 3. When she is sure that there is an equal amount of clay in each ball you can proceed.
7. Flatten one of the balls of clay into a pancake shape. Repeat the question and answer process from step 5 about the amount of clay in each shape.
8. Thank the child for her participation and congratulate her on her success.

Conservation of Mass

Use *CONSERVATION OF MASS* on the opposite page to answer the questions below.

S0CM01

10 What would you find out from the research activity?

S0CM03

11 Do you think the instructions are easy to understand?

YES NO

Fill in one box and give a reason for your choice, referring to the text.

SC0M09

12 Jean Piaget also described a research activity for the conservation of volume using water and jars.

The test for conservation of volume would need to use

- equal quantities of water in jars of equal dimensions.
- equal quantities of water in jars of different dimensions.
- different quantities of water in jars of equal dimensions.
- different quantities of water in jars of different dimensions.



Marking Guides Grade 5, Grade 6 and Grade 7

SPRING DRAGON

Q1 Grandfather says that when dragons shake their tail

Aspect: Retrieving information

Descriptor: Combine directly stated information from several sentences of a narrative extract.

Key: C – you hear thunder.

Q2 Why does Tan Yali think Grandfather slurps his porridge?

Aspect: Interpreting

Descriptor: Link and combine information across a narrative extract to explain a character's behaviour.

Marking Guide

1 pt: Refers to Grandfather challenging his daughter.

- Grandfather slurps his porridge to show he will do what he likes.
- He's showing that he will do what he likes, even if it bothers his daughter.
- He thinks he's slurping in protest.
- Grandfather is showing his daughter he can do what he wants.
- He doesn't like what the mother said.

OR Refers to Grandfather annoying his daughter.

- Grandfather slurps because he knows it gets on his daughter's nerves.
- He thinks he's slurping to try and annoy his daughter.
- because the mother doesn't like it
- because he knew his mother hated it when Grandfather did it

0 pt: Other answers, including implausible, vague and irrelevant responses.

- because he wants to let his daughter know he is enjoying it
- because Grandfather really likes porridge
- He thinks Grandfather is playing a joke on them.
- because the porridge is hot
- because he doesn't have teeth (irrelevant)

Q3 Why does Tan Yali's mother 'clear her throat'?

Aspect: Interpreting

Descriptor: Link information separated by several sentences in a narrative extract to identify the purpose of a character's action.

Key: D – She does not approve of Grandfather telling the story.

EXTREME PHENOMENA

Q4 In which year was the coldest temperature recorded?

Aspect: Retrieving information

Descriptor: Locate information by recognising closely paraphrased information in the question, in a table about extreme weather events.

Key: D – 1983

Q5 What is this table about?

Aspect: Interpreting

Descriptor: Recognise the general topic of a table about extreme weather conditions by comparing multiple pieces of information.

Key: C – unusual weather conditions

Q6 What does the table tell us about Florida?

Aspect: Retrieving information

Descriptor: Locate information that is explicitly stated in a table about extreme weather events.

Key: B – It is a very sunny place.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Q7 ‘feeling deprived and lonely’

‘engaged in boisterous playground activities’

Why does Melissa place quotation marks (‘ ’) around these words in her letter?

Aspect: Reflecting

Descriptors

2 pt: Explain the significance of inverted commas (indicating quotation) in a letter to the editor and infer who is being quoted from context.

1 pt: Explain the significance of inverted commas (indicating quotation) in a letter to the editor.

Marking Guide

2 pt: Refers specifically to quote from Peter.

- Peter Hildegard wrote them in his letter.
- They are little quotes Hildegard made in his letter.
- It’s what Peter Hildegard said.
- Because by not changing the words he used she can comment them and give us an idea about what he said. [Implied understanding that she has used the quote from Peter Hildegard]

- 1 pt: Refers to quoting someone else.
- Someone else said that.
 - She has copied it from somewhere.
 - People have said these words to her.

- 0 pt: Vague or incorrect.
- She is speaking.
 - because they are describing her
 - The writer is saying those words to the reader.
 - so you take more notice
 - They were activities she could not do.
 - She thinks they're lies.
 - They are the key words to the sentence.

Q8 Melissa calls others 'non-disabled' rather than 'abled'.

What point is she trying to make?

Aspect: Reflecting

Descriptor: Use common general knowledge to explain the purpose of the author's choice of words in a letter to the editor.

Marking Guide

- 1 pt: Refers to undermining conventions of normality, affirmative action or the promotion of equality.
- She is saying disabled is good and the others have a problem.
 - Because they are abled does not mean they are gifted.
 - Everyone is 'able' whether they have a disability or not.
 - That everyone is equal no matter if they can walk or not.
 - So they feel what it is like to have disabled in their name.
 - that the immediate action towards disabled people is that they are in wheelchairs [Poorly expressed idea of resisting stereotype]
 - They are the different ones, not her.
 - They are not superior to disabled people.

- OR Refers to sharing disability label.
- so everyone has disabled in their name
 - that they are not in a wheelchair
 - They are not like her.

- 0 pt: Vague or incorrect.
- that she is better
 - She is making a point about other people not being disabled.
 - She is trying to be nice.
 - They are fortunate and non-disabled.
 - She wants non-disabled people to help out.
 - She doesn't want to say a word that sounds horrible.

Q9 The last paragraph begins with, 'We belong in this world'.

Who are 'we'?

Aspect: Interpreting

Descriptor: Infer the meaning of a pronoun reference by recognising a main idea in a letter to the editor.

Marking Guide

- 1 pt: Refers to disabled people.
- Disabled people
 - People in wheelchairs
- 0 pt: Vague or incorrect.
- Melissa and her friends
 - Students

CONSERVATION OF MASS

Q10 What would you find out from the research activity?

Aspect: Interpreting

Descriptor: Explain the main purpose of a research activity.

Marking Guide

- 1 pt: Refers to child's thought, understanding, or ability to conserve mass.
- if a child can conserve mass
 - the way a child thinks about mass
 - what a child thinks happens when you change the shape of an object
 - how children think
 - Children cannot always understand the differences between mass, amount or weight.
 - that children know how the clay would have the same mass despite which shape it is in
 - how children think

- 0 pt: Vague or incorrect.
- investigating mass
 - how to do research

Q11 Do you think the instructions are easy to understand?

Give a reason for your choice, referring to the text.

Aspect: Reflecting

Descriptor: Provide a reason to support a personal opinion about the ease of understanding the steps of a research activity.

Marking Guide

- 1 pt: Answers YES or NO and refers to a characteristic or element of the text that could facilitate or inhibit comprehension.
- YES: The step-by-step layout makes them easy to follow.
 - YES: They are written in everyday language.
 - NO: the procedure is too long and the steps are difficult to understand. The steps should be shorter.
 - NO: There are too many things included in each step.
 - NO: Some of the language is difficult to understand.
- 0 pt: Answers YES or NO, but does not support opinion with reference to the text.
- They are easy to understand.
 - They're too difficult to understand.
 - I like doing research activities.

Q12 Jean Piaget also described a research activity for the conservation of volume using water and jars.

The test for conservation of volume would need to use

Aspect: Interpreting

Descriptor: Recognise and apply an underlying principle of a research activity and adapt it to a new situation.

Key: B – equal quantities of water in jars of different dimensions.