



**ISA**  
**Reading**  
**Sample Materials**

**Grade 3**  
**Grade 4**  
**Grade 5**

**Sample**



# ISA Reading Sample Materials

## Grade 3, Grade 4 and Grade 5

This collection of reading sample materials represents a typical range of reading material in ISA tests from Grade 3 to Grade 5. 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 set of instructions;
- some short arguments;
- a narrative extract; and
- a table of events.

An actual ISA reading test has six or seven pieces of stimulus from a range of text types that also includes poems, charts, descriptions, expositions and diagrams. This collection has three questions per stimulus. An actual ISA reading test has four or five questions per stimulus. Depending on the grade level, an ISA reading test for grades 3 to 5 has 25-32 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 5 multiple-choice questions and 7 open-ended questions requiring students to write a response. An actual ISA test has approximately 50 per cent multiple-choice questions and 50 per cent 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 3, 4 and 5. Some materials may be too hard for Grade 3 and some materials may be too easy for Grade 5. 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 5, 6 and 7
- Grades 7, 8, 9 and 10.

# Mirror Messages



**FIND** a pencil with an eraser.

**WRITE** a message on a mirror.  
Use the eraser end of the pencil.



**POLISH** the mirror very lightly.  
Remove all the eraser marks you can see.



**BREATHE** hard on the mirror. The message  
will reappear.



**PLAY** a joke on your family. Write an eraser  
note on the bathroom mirror. The message  
will appear when the room gets steamy.

# Mirror Messages

Use the piece of writing called *MIRROR MESSAGES* on the opposite page to answer the questions below.

S3MM01

- 1** When you make a mirror message, you use an eraser to
- rub out your writing.
  - write your message.
  - make the message reappear.
  - polish the mirror.

S3MM05

**2** **FIND      WRITE      POLISH      BREATHE**

Why are these words written in bold, capital letters?

- You say them loudly.
- They are the words you write on the mirror.
- They are the main instructions.
- To make the writing look interesting.

SMM06

**3** *MIRROR MESSAGES* tells you about a joke you can play on your family.

Do you think this is a good joke?

- YES     NO

Fill in one box and give a reason for your answer.

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# Happiness

We asked you to tell us what happiness means to you.  
Here are some of the many replies we received.

Happiness is

- holidays
- playing with my friends
- watching my favourite television program

AND

- my team winning the finals!

Max

We are often told that money does not mean happiness. However I'd be extremely happy if I was rich!

Kayla

Happiness is infectious.  
Smile at someone and see what happens: they'll nearly always smile back.

Andy

Happiness is different things to different people.

A sunny day makes me happy but farmers enjoy the rain.

Sara

It's all about attitude,  
not about how much you have.

Josh

# Happiness

The letters about HAPPINESS on the opposite page come from a magazine.

Use HAPPINESS to answer the questions below.

L3HPL1

**4** Which writer thinks that wealth can add to happiness?

- Max
- Kayla
- Andy
- Sara
- Josh

L3HPL2

**5** Which two writers are most likely to agree with Josh?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

L3HPL5

**6** Sara's second sentence is an example that shows how 'Happiness is different things to different people.'

Write another example that Sara could have used.

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# 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.

R051701

**7** Grandfather says that when dragons shake their tail

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

R051704

**8** Why does Tan Yali think Grandfather slurps his porridge?

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R051707

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

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

# Chinese Activities

## VALLEY VIEW COLLEGE AND GOLDEN LAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL PRESENT A WEEKEND OF CHINESE ACTIVITIES

### VALLEY VIEW COLLEGE HALL

*Saturday 7th February, 2 pm*

#### **CHINESE ACROBATS**

*Be amazed by the balancing and juggling skills of this professional team.*

*Sunday 8th February, 7 pm*

#### **MARTIAL ARTS WORKSHOP**

*Martial arts are great for your mind and body.*

*Take part in this informative session.*

*Bookings essential on 9497 5780*

### GOLDEN LAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL THEATRE

*Saturday 7th February, 2 pm*

#### **CHINESE OPERA**

*Experience the magical beauty of traditional Chinese opera.*

*Bookings essential on 9435 2397*

### GOLDEN LAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL LIBRARY

*Saturday 7th February, 5 pm*

#### **BILINGUAL STORYTIME – CHINESE/ENGLISH**

*You are invited to participate in our special bilingual storytime.*

*All children and families are welcome to participate.*

*Join us for a fun evening!*

*Bookings essential on 9437 1189*

### VALLEY VIEW COLLEGE KITCHEN

*Sunday 8th February, 4 pm*

#### **AFTERNOON TEA**

*Enjoy the chance to taste a range of different Chinese teas.*

*Sunday 8th February, 7 pm*

#### **CHINESE COOKING**

*An experienced and qualified chef will teach you the secrets of making delicious Chinese dishes.*

*Bookings essential on 9465 5353*

### GOLDEN LAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL HALL

*Sunday 8th February, 2 pm*

#### **CHINESE ACROBATS**

*Be amazed by the balancing and juggling skills of this professional team.*

# Chinese Activities

Use CHINESE ACTIVITIES on the opposite page to answer the questions below.

S3CA01

**10** Which one of the activities will be in both Chinese and English?

- Chinese Cooking
- Chinese Acrobats
- Bilingual Storytime
- Martial Arts Workshop

S3CA03

**11** Write one more activity that you think the schools could offer that would fit into the weekend's activities.

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Give a reason for your choice.

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S3CA04

**12** Ken wants to go to both the Chinese Acrobats and the Chinese Opera.

To do both where must he go to see the Chinese Acrobats?

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## MIRROR MESSAGES

**Q1** When you write a mirror message, you use an eraser to

*Aspect:* Retrieving information

*Descriptor:* Locate directly stated information in the second step of a procedure.

*Key:* B – write your message.

**Q2** **FIND WRITE POLISH BREATHE**

**Why are these words written in bold capital letters?**

*Aspect:* Reflecting

*Descriptor:* Recognise that words in bold capital letters in a text delineate procedural steps.

*Key:* C – They are the main instructions.

**Q3** **MIRROR MESSAGES** tells you about a joke you can play on your family.

**Do you think this is a good joke?**

**Put an X in one box and give a reason for your answer.**

*Aspect:* Reflecting

*Descriptor:* Give a personal opinion on the quality of a trick described in a procedural text.

### Marking guide

1 pt: Answers YES or NO and gives a reason.

- No because mum would be cross with me for marking the mirror.
- No because it might frighten somebody.
- No it probably would not work so it would be a waste of time.

OR

- Yes because I think it's fun / funny.
- Yes it's a good joke for little kids.
- Yes because if someone takes a bath they'll think a phantom is there.
- Yes, if you want to annoy someone.

0 pt: Answers YES or NO without elaboration or gives an irrelevant or vague answer that is not based in the text.

- Yes
- No
- I like to make the bathroom steamy.
- Yes, it is a good joke. [repeats stem]

# HAPPINESS

**Q4 Which writer thinks wealth can add to happiness?**

*Aspect:* Interpreting

*Descriptor:* Compare five very short opinionative texts to identify which of them includes a given main idea.

*Key:* B – Kayla

**Q5 Which two writers are most likely to agree with Josh?**

*Aspect:* Interpreting

*Descriptor:* Compare five very short opinionative texts to find a point of view shared by three of them.

## Marking Guide

1 pt: Lists Andy AND Sara only.

0 pt: Other.

**Q6 Sara's second sentence is an example that shows how 'Happiness is different things to different people.'**

**Write another example that Sara could have used.**

*Aspect:* Interpreting

*Descriptors*

2 pt: Generates an example that includes contrary elements modelled closely on an idea in a short opinionative text.

1 pt: Generates an example modelled broadly on an idea in a short opinionative text.

## Marking Guide

2 pt: Gives example that describes contrasting interpretations of happiness. Both examples are positive and from the same conceptual category.

- Kids love school holidays but their parents wish they were at school.
- Having a bath makes some happy and others like to roll in the mud.
- A weekend always makes me happy but teachers love to go to school.
- A cold day makes desert people happy but a warm day makes me happy. [Example may be about weather but must be substantively different to Sara's example.]

- 1 pt: Gives an example of happiness without contrast (though it may be implied) OR with a negative contrast only OR gives two examples of happiness from different conceptual categories.
- Some people like bright colours and others don't. [negative contrast only]
  - Some people like to play rough games with their friends. [no contrast]
  - I might be happy with my maths results. [no contrast]
  - I like doing maths. [implies that most people don't]
  - I hate chocolate. [implies that most people like it - accept negative statement where "norm" is positive - i.e. an obvious source of happiness]
  - I like ballet. My mum likes the colour green. [two positives but from different conceptual categories]
- 0 pt: Vague including general ideas about happiness instead of examples.
- Some people have different ideas of happiness.
  - Farmers don't always enjoy the rain. Too much rain isn't good so they might like the sun.
  - Happiness is many things.
- OR Repeats the terms of Sara's examples or makes trivial substitutions
- Sunny days make farmers happy but I enjoy the rain.
  - Sunny days make me happy but ducks enjoy the rain.

## SPRING DRAGON

### Q7 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.

### Q8 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)

**Q9 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.

## CHINESE ACTIVITIES

**Q10 Which one of the activities will be in both Chinese and English?**

*Aspect:* Retrieving information

*Descriptor:* Use several clues to select one activity that meets a given criterion from a moderately dense text (program of activities).

*Key:* C – Bilingual Storytime

**Q11 Write one more activity that you think the schools could offer that would fit into the weekend's activities. Give a reason for your choice.**

*Aspect:* Reflecting

*Descriptor:* Generate a new activity that matches the theme and targeted audience for a program of activities.

### Marking Guide

- 1 pt: Suggests any activity relevant to the Chinese theme with or without an explanation.

OR Suggests a 'generic' activity but explanation makes it clear that it is a Chinese version of the activity.

- Chinese music. Chinese music is famous all over the world.
- Calligraphy. It's a famous Chinese activity.
- Chinese paper dragons. They are really special.
- Making Chinese paper dragons. It would be fun.
- Chinese music. I like music.

0 pt: Suggests an activity without direct relevance to the Chinese theme, with or without an explanation or an activity already present in the schedule.

- Doing painting. I like to paint pictures.
- Cooking

**Q12 Ken wants to go to both the Chinese Acrobats and the Chinese Opera.**

**To do both where must he go to see the Chinese Acrobats?**

*Aspect:* Interpreting

*Descriptor:* Locate and combine information from two different sections of a moderately dense text (a program of activities).

1 pt: Identifies the primary school venue or the date in a way that distinguishes it from the college venue.

- Golden Lake Primary school hall
- Golden Lake hall
- Golden Lake
- the Primary school
- Sunday
- 8th Feb

0 pt: Other