

Tips for MCAS ELA Success

Dates to Remember:

Tuesday, March 31, 2015: Reading Comprehension (Day 1)

Wednesday, April 1, 2015: Reading Comprehension (Day 2)

Thursday, April 2, 2015: Long Composition (Day 3)

MCAS Facts:

- The test consists of approximately 42 items worth 60 points.
- You will be asked to answer three types of questions:
 - Multiple Choice
 - Open Response Questions (ORQ)
 - Long Composition
- Test results are reported on the following scale:

260-280	Advanced
240-258	Proficient
220-238	Needs Improvement
200-218	Failing
- Students are required to pass the 10th grade ELA MCAS test to be eligible to receive a high school diploma.
- Students are given multiple opportunities to pass, if needed.

General Tips for the MCAS:

- NEVER leave anything blank—answer every question (even if that means you have to guess).
- Read the questions first (including the ORQ).
- Read the *italicized* introduction—it will have important directions and information for the test.
- Read actively—you can use a highlighter and pencil to annotate the readings.
- Take your time! The school sets a 3-hour delay for you to finish the test, but you are given until the end of the school day (2:30 pm) to finish the test section.
- Get a good night's sleep.
- Make sure you eat breakfast and bring snacks for the test. A snack will also be provided during the test.

Tips for Multiple Choice Questions:

- To know what to look for, read the questions first.
- Use a highlighter and pencil to annotate the readings.
- Understand vocabulary by using context clues.
- Use the process of elimination to get the best possible answer.
- If you are stuck on a question, guess!

Tips for Open Response Questions:

- Read the question and make sure you understand what is being asked.
- **Start with a topic sentence** where you are rephrasing the question.
- Make sure to use **examples and direct quotations**.
- Your response should be a nicely-sized paragraph (between 5-10 sentences).
- If you are stuck on the answer, summarize the passage.

Tips for Long Composition:

- Have a few books or stories that you know very well (you cannot use the book during the test, so know the title and the author's name).
- Read the prompt and make sure you understand what is being asked, you can also use a dictionary during this section.
- Break the prompt down and plan each of your body paragraphs to answer a part of the prompt.
- You will need an **introduction, body paragraphs (three), and a conclusion**.
- Always include the author and title (underlined) in your thesis.
- Use examples in your body paragraphs.
- Outline the essay before you write the draft.
- Before you turn in your work, proofread your long composition.