

## **MCAS ELA Fact Sheet**

Dates: To Be Announced

Computer-based test

Approximately 45 multiple choice questions and 4 essay responses

Reading: assesses critical thinking, application of knowledge, making connections between reading and writing.

Writing: 4 formal essay responses (2 per day): a variety of narrative, informative and argumentative text types.

FAQ's—

*What if I don't pass the test?*

- You will have several other chances to take the test, starting next fall.

*What if I still don't pass the test?*

- You will submit evidence of your competence with respect to essay writing. Save all of your writing assignments from your classes! Bring them to me so I can keep them safe and we can work on them throughout the school year.

*How can I ensure the best possible score?*

- Read! In your spare time, read fiction and non-fiction stories, essays, newspaper articles. I will show you what to do while reading to improve your comprehension.
- Work hard in class.
- Practice the strategies your teachers show you.

# Reading Strategies

--Underline key phrases while reading. How do you decide what is “key?”

1. Look for words that signal importance, such as “terrible,” “realize,” and “powerful” from “Snapping an Iconic “Photo.”
2. Identify transition phrases the signal importance, for example, “first of all...” “especially,” “finally,” etc.

--Pay close attention to introductions and conclusions. The essential ideas of a passage will usually be emphasized here.

--Make notes on the computer notepad in your own language to paraphrase important or difficult text.

--Use your translating dictionary to look up every word you need.

Remember—some words will appear in a different form, not how they appear in the dictionary.

For example:

“ran” is past tense for “run” so look at words that are similar if you can’t find the exact one.

“hunger” is a noun, “hungry” is an adjective—be aware that there are different forms and tenses of the same basic word.

## The Reading Comprehension sessions of the MCAS—**advice**

- Don't be intimidated by difficult passages! There is much you can understand if you go slowly and try.
- Read the short description above the beginning of the excerpt and be aware of the background information it supplies. It is usually essential in helping you understand the passage.
- Look over the multiple-choice questions BEFORE reading the passage to get an idea of what you will need to answer, and highlight any parts of the text while reading, that address these questions.
- Read the open response question, if there is one for the passage. Then, while reading the passage, highlight parts of the text that will help you answer the prompt.
- While reading the prompt, make brief notes on a separate sheet of paper to summarize the information you understand in each paragraph.
- Circle words you are not sure of as you encounter them, and look them up in your translating dictionary.
- Read all footnoted information, definitions provided, or anything else that is provided to you.
- When answering multiple choice questions, look in the passage for the proof (evidence) for the answer you chose! When asked to choose the BEST answer, pick the answer with the most evidence in the text.