

Middle Grades Language Arts Diagnostic Test

This 55 multiple-choice question diagnostic test has been designed to include the rigor of Common Core standards and to assess student strengths and weaknesses in grammar, mechanics, and writing skills. Questions vary in levels of difficulty so that you may quickly diagnose weaknesses among your students at the beginning of the school year. Test results may also be used to offer information regarding students with exceptional advanced language arts skills. For assessment, differentiation, and progress tracking, this test is a helpful tool to begin the year as well as to benchmark student progress all year long.

Scope of tested skills:

- Capitalization – 1 question
- Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers – 2 questions
- Denotation and Connotation – 3 questions
- Dictionary and Thesaurus 2 questions
- Formal and Informal Language – 1 question
- Greek and Latin Roots – 2 questions
- Homophone Usage – 1 question
- Phrases – 6 questions
- Pronoun Usage - 3 questions
- Punctuation – 5 questions
- Research Skills – 2 questions
- Run-ons, Comma splices, and Fragments – 4 questions
- Simple, Compound, Complex, and Compound-Complex Sentences – 4 questions
- Subject and Predicate - 6 questions
- Then and Than Usage - 1 question
- Thesis Statements, Topic Sentences, and Supporting Details – 4 questions
- Transition Words – 5 questions
- Writing Vocabulary – 3 questions

LA Diagnostic Test

Transition Words – Questions 1 - 5

Matching (1-5)

- A. Provide an example C. Give more information E. Chronological order
B. Comparison or contrast D. Show emphasis

Match the following transition word or phrase with its use (see answers above).

1. in fact
2. furthermore
3. similarly
4. afterwards
5. for instance

Pronoun Usage (6-8)

6. _____ have the same class fifth period.
A. Her and me B. Her and I C. She and I D. She and myself
7. My sister bought a video game for my brother and _____.
A. me B. I C. myself D. none of these is correct
8. A peer helper must be enthusiastic and polite, and you must be sure to listen to instructions.
What correction should be made?
A. comma after enthusiastic C. you should be **they**
B. you should be **he or she** D. sentence is correct as is

Then and Than Usage (9)

9. Jake is a better basketball player _____ me.
A. then B. than

Capitalization (10)

10. katie is really enjoying her middle school english class this year, but she's not doing as well in mr. bolton's algebra class.
Which words should be capitalized in the sentence?
A. katie, english, mr. bolton's
B. katie, middle, school, english, mr. bolton's
C. katie, english, mr. bolton's, algebra
D. katie, middle, school, english, mr. bolton's, algebra, class

Punctuation (11-15)

11. I helped with a Habitat for Humanity house this summer and it was an incredible experience.
Which word would be followed by a comma?
A. helped B. house C. summer D. no comma needed
12. Eva was paid \$100 to walk the dog and water the plants.
Which word would be followed by a comma?
A. paid B. \$100 C. dog D. no comma needed
13. Indicate which of the following is correct:
A. My teacher told me that I had the highest score on the test.
B. My teacher told me, that I had the highest score on the test.
C. My teacher told me, "that I had the highest score on the test."
D. no correct answer given

14. Indicate which of the following is correct:

- A. I was born on June, 14, 2002, in Marietta Georgia.
- B. I was born on June 14, 2002, in Marietta, Georgia.
- C. I was born on June 14 2002, in Marietta Georgia.
- D. I was born on June 14 2002 in Marietta, Georgia.

15. My _____ names are Sadie, Krista, and Reagan.

- A. friends
- B. friend's
- C. friends'
- D. no correct answer given

Subject and Predicate (16 – 21)

16. Discuss the trip with your parents.

What is the **simple subject** of this sentence?

- A. Discuss
- B. trip
- C. parents
- D. understood you

17. Where did he get those neon shoes?

What is the **simple subject** of this sentence?

- A. Where
- B. did
- C. he
- D. shoes

18. Hiking is one of my favorite activities.

What is the **simple subject** of this sentence?

- A. Hiking
- B. one
- C. favorite
- D. activities

19. The Constitution of the United States of America is over 200 years old.

What is the **complete subject** of this sentence?

- A. Constitution
- B. United States of America
- C. United States
- D. The Constitution of the United States of America

20. Emma left her agenda on the bus last week.

What is the **simple predicate** of this sentence?

- A. Emma
- B. left
- C. her
- D. on

21. Our school district has over 43,000 students this year.

What is the **complete predicate** of this sentence?

- A. Our school district
- B. has over
- C. has over 43,000 students
- D. has over 43,000 students this year

Phrases (22 – 27)

Match the **underlined** phrase in each sentence with the correct type of phrase (22 – 25).

- A. appositive phrase
- B. infinitive phrase
- C. participial phrase
- D. prepositional phrase

22. The book with the torn cover is Kevin's.

23. Batman, the Caped Crusader, is my favorite superhero.

24. Washed with soap and water, out dog was allowed back on the couch.

25. Amelia won't be able to go on the field trip because she has to have surgery on her foot.

26. The capital of our state is Atlanta.

In this sentence the underlined prepositional phrase is functioning as a(n) _____ phrase.

- A. adjective
- B. adverb
- C. noun
- D. verb

27. The cat ran out the door as soon as Molly opened it.

In this sentence the underlined prepositional phrase is functioning as a(n) _____ phrase.

- A. adjective
- B. adverb
- C. noun
- D. verb

Homophone Usage (28)

28. _____ teachers think _____ important to complete the agenda daily.
A. There, its B. Their, it's C. They're, its D. There, it's

Run-ons, Comma splices, and Fragments (29 – 32)

29. While I was watching my little brother.
This is an example of
A. a complete sentence. C. a comma splice.
B. a sentence fragment. D. a run-on sentence.
30. "Please stop talking and watch the movie," she begged.
This is an example of
A. a complete sentence. C. a comma splice.
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31. Our group met at the coffee shop and we studied for two hours.
A. a complete sentence. C. a comma splice.
B. a sentence fragment. D. a run-on sentence.
32. Carson ordered an iced coffee, John didn't get anything.
A. a complete sentence. C. a comma splice.
B. a sentence fragment. D. a run-on sentence.

Formal and Informal Language (33)

33. Which sentence would be the MOST appropriate for a formal research paper?
A. Surveys indicate that not all of the teachers are on the same page.
B. Surveys said that not all teachers are on the same page.
C. Surveys tell the story of how all of the teachers weren't in agreement.
D. Surveys indicate that the teachers are not in agreement.

Simple, Compound, Complex, and Compound-Complex Sentences (34 – 37)

34. *Which sentence is a simple sentence?*
A. Noah competed against Jaden's team in the first game of the tournament.
B. Alicia took a break from studying, and now she's watching her favorite show.
C. Will Daniel be able to play since he hurt his wrist?
D. When Chloe had forgotten to call her mom, she was so glad that her brother reminded her with a text message.
35. *Which sentence is a compound sentence?*
A. I like to walk along the beach in the early morning hours, but Zoey likes to sleep in on vacation.
B. Be sure to bring the chips, paper plates, and napkins with you to the park.
C. If you like swimming, you should join a health club with an indoor pool.
D. He went to his cousin's house for dinner and forgot to study.
36. *Which sentence is a complex sentence?*
A. I didn't want to go to the museum with my parents, but the Dream Cars exhibit was excellent.
B. My dad didn't want to pay the additional baggage fee, so I was only able to pack two pairs of shoes.
C. We saw two different kinds of monkeys when we visited Costa Rica in February.
D. After the long ride home last Tuesday, Mom didn't want to cook dinner.
37. *Which sentence is a compound-complex sentence?*
A. I really liked the blueberry cake with the lemon frosting, but Hannah preferred the double chocolate brownies.
B. Mark Twain is one of my favorite authors because I like his sense of humor.
C. They are no longer friends, for he had a habit of telling embarrassing stories about her.
D. Even though I didn't want to wear a tuxedo, my sister's wedding was fun, and I'm glad I got to play a part.

Transition Words – Questions 1 - 5

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|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
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| B. Comparison or contrast | D. Show emphasis | |

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 C 2. furthermore
 B 3. similarly
 E 4. afterwards
 A 5. for instance

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- C 6. _____ have the same class fifth period.
 A. Her and me B. Her and I **C. She and I** D. She and myself
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 A. **me** B. I C. myself D. none of these is correct
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Which words should be capitalized in the sentence?
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 B. katie, middle, school, english, mr. bolton's
 C. katie, english, mr. bolton's, algebra
 D. katie, middle, school, english, mr. bolton's, algebra, class

Punctuation (11-15)

- C 11. I helped with a Habitat for Humanity house this summer and it was an incredible experience.
Which word would be followed by a comma?
 A. helped B. house **C. summer** D. no comma needed
- D 12. Eva was paid \$100 to walk the dog and water the plants.
Which word would be followed by a comma?
 A. paid B. \$100 C. dog **D. no comma needed**
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 B. My teacher told me, that I had the highest score on the test.
 C. My teacher told me, "that I had the highest score on the test."
 D. no correct answer given

Research Skills (54 – 55)

54. Which of the following citations is in the correct MLA format?

- A. Google Search, "Rebuilding Afghanistan," internet article by Charlie Keenan, 2002, from Scholastic.com. on 3 July 2014.
- B. Keenan, Charlie. "Rebuilding Afghanistan." *Scholastic News Online*. Scholastic.com, 2002. Web. 3 July 2014.
- C. "Rebuilding Afghanistan" by Charlie Keenan, 2002.
- D. *Scholastic News Online*. "Rebuilding Afghanistan." Keenan, Charlie. Scholastic.com. 2002. Web. 3 July 2014.

55. When writing a research paper about struggles women face in Afghanistan today, what would be a good search term to use to find relevant results?

- A. Afghanistan children in the Middle East
- B. Prejudice against women in history
- C. Afghanistan discrimination against women
- D. U.S. involvement in Afghanistan

Denotation and Connotation (47 – 49)

47. The denotation of a word is the _____.
- A. association (emotional or otherwise) which the word evokes
 - B. literal meaning of the word; dictionary definition
 - C. pronunciation of the word
 - D. origin of the word
48. Which word has the most positive connotation?
- A. superior
 - B. good
 - C. fine
 - D. tolerable
49. In which sentence is the bold word used with a negative connotation?
- A. All of the reality show contestants did a **fine** job controlling their nerves during the interviews.
 - B. Her blonde hair was long and **fine**, so she didn't need to use a flat iron.
 - C. We were surprised to find that our budget hotel room had a **fine** view of the pristine beach.
 - D. "Since you forgot to pick up the coffee I like, I guess the other will have to be **fine**."

Thesis Statements, Topic Sentences, and Supporting Details (50 – 53)

Read the paragraph below then answer the questions.

¹ Food additives have transformed our food supply and have recently become a hot topic for debate among many Americans. ² Food producers claim that additives are necessary ingredients that help stop the growth of molds and bacteria keeping food fresh longer as well as improving taste for consumers. ³ However, health advocates claim that food additives contribute to health problems such as cancer and obesity. ⁴ Salt can be used for countless purposes such as removing snow and ice from roads, softening water, preserving food, and stabilizing soils for construction. ⁵ Consumers should keep in mind that all corporations are in business to make money and produce whatever sells, even if their products are not healthy; therefore, it is vital that consumers educate themselves about the dangers of chemical additives and change their shopping and eating routines to eliminate toxic additives from their diet.

50. Which sentence does not belong in the above paragraph?
- A. sentence 1
 - B. sentence 2
 - C. sentence 3
 - D. sentence 4
51. Which one of the following sentences can be added to the paragraph?
- A. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that 1/8th of the world population suffered from chronic undernourishment in 2010-2012.
 - B. Leafy greens can become contaminated from contact with wild animals, manure, contaminated water, or poor handling during harvest and prewashing.
 - C. In the United States, more than 3,000 substances can be added to foods for the purpose of preservation, coloring, texture, increasing flavor and more.
 - D. Cornell University researchers found that obtaining natural gas through the fracking method is in fact as polluting as coal.
52. Which sentence is the topic sentence in the above paragraph?
- A. sentence 1
 - B. sentence 2
 - C. sentence 5
 - D. sentence 6
53. Which sentence is the thesis statement in the above paragraph?
- A. sentence 1
 - B. sentence 2
 - C. sentence 4
 - D. sentence 5

Greek and Latin Roots (38 – 39)

38. The root **funct** means *to work or to perform*. What does the word **defunct** mean?
- A. no longer operating
B. an action or use for which something is suited
C. done routinely or without thought
D. capable of operating

39. The root **valid** means *to be strong or be worth*. What does the word **validate** mean?
- A. flawed; not acceptable or correct
B. not legal; not enforceable
C. to declare good; to accept as good
D. a large group; a great number

Dictionary and Thesaurus (40 – 41)

40. Look at this thesaurus entry:

calamity

Part of speech: *noun*

Definition: *disaster: a disastrous situation or event*

Synonyms: *catastrophe, ruin, tragedy,*

Which would be a calamity?

- A. pizza with no pepperoni B. a bad grade C. a dead cell phone D. a hurricane

41. During math class yesterday Mason suffered from an acute case of the hiccups and went to the nurse. *Select the definition of acute that the sentence uses:*

a·cute (adj)

[ə kyóot]

- A. very great or bad: extremely serious, severe, or painful
B. perceptive: keenly perceptive and intelligent
C. sensitive: very powerful and sensitive to detail

Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers (42 – 43)

42. Which of the following sentences contains a dangling or misplaced modifier?
- A. After Leon showed off his skills in the tournament, the coach moved him to the varsity team.
B. While eating a pizza, my cat curled up to me.
C. As he strolled down the hall, Tanner could hear the girls laughing by the drinking fountain.
D. Solomon texted Morgan to let her know that he wouldn't be able to make it to the band concert.

43. Which of the following sentences is **correct**?

- A. While preparing dinner, the smoke detector went off.
B. He left the library wearing a leather jacket.
C. Hungry and frustrated, the child's tears signaled that it was time to leave.
D. While walking to class, I remembered that I had forgotten to proofread my paper.

Writing Vocabulary (44 – 46)

44. Which word is a synonym for narrative?

- A. play B. story C. title D. debate

45. Argumentative essays try to prove _____.

- A. rebuttals B. concessions C. claims D. evidence

46. Which type of writing must have a thesis statement?

- A. argumentative B. narrative C. summary D. letter

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- B 28. _____ teachers think _____ important to complete the agenda daily.
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- A. Afghanistan orphans in the Middle East
 - B. Prejudice against women throughout history
 - C. Afghanistan discrimination against women**
 - D. Female U.S. involvement in Afghanistan