



# Exemplar Grade 6 Reading Test Questions



[discoveractaspire.org](https://discoveractaspire.org)



# Introduction

This booklet explains ACT Aspire® Grade 6 Reading test questions by presenting, with their answer keys, sample questions aligned to each reporting category on the test. A key includes the question's depth-of-knowledge (DOK) level,<sup>1</sup> an explanation of the task posed by each question, a thorough explanation of correct responses, ideas for improvement, and more. The exemplar test questions included here are representative of the range of content and types of questions found on the ACT Aspire Grade 6 Reading test. Educators can use this resource in several ways:

- Become familiar with ACT Aspire question types.
- See what typical questions in each ACT Aspire reporting category look like.
- Help reinforce or adjust teaching and learning objectives.
- Learn how ACT Aspire improvement idea statements can help students identify key skills they have not yet mastered.

Each ACT Aspire Reading assessment contains several passages, including literary narratives (prose fiction, memoirs, personal essays) and informational texts (social science, natural science). Within and across grade levels, the passages span a range of complexity levels in order to provide students, teachers, and parents with information about how well students understand texts of increasing difficulty. Students answer a series of selected-response (multiple-choice), technology-enhanced, and constructed-response questions that assess their abilities to recognize meaning in, reason logically about, and make connections between and among texts. ACT Aspire Reading questions operate at various DOK levels, or cognitive complexities, and reflect a range of difficulty appropriate for the grade level.

All levels of ACT Aspire Reading assessments include constructed-response tasks that measure the higher-order cognitive processes necessary for reading and understanding increasingly complex texts. Constructed-response tasks are scored according to rubrics that allow students to receive varying amounts of credit for responses that are correct or partially correct, enabling differentiation between multiple skill levels.

The types of constructed-response tasks in ACT Aspire Reading assessments include the following examples:

- Formulate a conclusion by making connections within a passage, and provide support using specific details from the text.

---

<sup>1</sup> Norman L. Webb, "Depth-of-Knowledge Levels for Four Content Areas," last modified March 28, 2002, <http://facstaff.wcer.wisc.edu/normw/All%20content%20areas%20%20DOK%20levels%2032802.doc>.

- Formulate a conclusion by making connections between a pair of passages, and provide support using specific details from both texts.
- Identify cause-and-effect relationships within a passage, and provide support using specific details from the text.
- Identify similarities and differences between the key ideas of paired passages, and provide support using specific details from both texts.

## Reporting Categories

ACT Aspire Reading tests assess skills in the following reporting categories, which are the same as the categories listed in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Reading strand and those found in the ACT College and Career Readiness Standards in Reading.

### Key Ideas and Details

These questions require students to read texts closely; to determine central ideas and themes and summarize information and ideas accurately; and to understand sequential, comparative, and cause-effect relationships.

### Craft and Structure

These questions require students to determine word and phrase meanings and analyze an author's word choice rhetorically as well as influences on the English language; to analyze text structure; and to understand purpose and point of view.

### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

These questions require students to understand how arguments are constructed and to make connections to prior knowledge and between and among texts.

## Improvement Ideas

ACT Aspire includes simple improvement ideas at the reporting category (skill) level on student and parent reports. These improvement ideas are provided for the lowest performing skill for each subject tested. The skills are always ordered from highest performing to lowest performing based on the percentage of points correct. If the percentages for two or more skills are tied, the skill with the lower number of total points is displayed first.

Keep in mind that the order of skills listed on reports may not always be exemplary of where to focus learning. For example, the skills in which a student performed within the ACT Readiness Range may not always be listed first, and the skills in which a student did not perform within the ACT Readiness Range may not always be listed last. Also, keep in mind the total number of points possible in each skill when interpreting the percentage correct.

There are two levels of improvement idea statements (low and high) for ACT Aspire summative reporting. Low statements are given on the report if the student's lowest skill score is below the ACT Readiness Range for that particular skill. High statements are given on the report if the student's lowest skill score is at or above the ACT Readiness Range for that particular skill.

# Answer Key

This section presents a reading passage and the sequence number, grade, question type, DOK level, alignment to the ACT Aspire reporting categories, and correct response for each question. Each question is accompanied by an explanation of the question and the correct response as well as improvement idea statements for ACT Aspire Reading.

## Passage: From *White Fang*

**LITERARY NARRATIVE:** This passage is adapted from the novel *White Fang* by Jack London (©1905 by Jack London).

He was different from his brothers and sisters. Their hair already betrayed the reddish hue inherited from their mother, the she-wolf; while he alone, in this particular, took after his father. He  
 5 was the one little gray cub of the litter. He had bred true to the straight wolf-stock—in fact, he had bred true, physically, to old One Eye himself, with but a single exception, and that was he had two eyes to his father's one.

10 The gray cub's eyes had not been open long, yet already he could see with steady clearness. And while his eyes were still closed, he had felt, tasted, and smelled. He knew his two brothers and his two sisters very well. He had begun to romp  
 15 with them in a feeble, awkward way, and even to squabble, his little throat vibrating with a queer rasping noise (the forerunner of the growl), as he worked himself into a passion. And long before his eyes had opened, he had learned by touch, taste,  
 20 and smell to know his mother—a fount of warmth and liquid food and tenderness. She possessed a gentle, caressing tongue that soothed him when it passed over his soft little body, and that impelled him to snuggle close against her and to doze off to  
 25 sleep.

Most of the first month of his life had been passed thus in sleeping; but now he could see quite well, and he stayed awake for longer periods of time, and he was coming to learn his world quite  
 30 well. His world was gloomy; but he did not know that, for he knew no other world. It was dim-lighted; but his eyes had never had to adjust themselves to any other light. His world was very small. Its limits were the walls of the lair; but as he  
 35 had no knowledge of the wide world outside, he was never oppressed by the narrow confines of his existence.

But he had early discovered that one wall of his world was different from the rest. This was the  
 40 mouth of the cave and the source of light. He had discovered that it was different from the other walls long before he had any thoughts of his own, any conscious volitions. It had been an irresistible attraction before ever his eyes opened and looked  
 45 upon it. The light from it had beat upon his sealed lids, and the eyes and the optic nerves had pulsed to little, sparklike flashes, warm-colored and strangely pleasing. The life of his body, and of every fibre of his body, the life that was the very  
 50 substance of his body and that was apart from his own personal life, had yearned toward this light and urged his body toward it in the same way that the cunning chemistry of a plant urges it toward the sun.

## Question 1

**LITERARY NARRATIVE:** This passage is adapted from the novel *White Fang* by Jack London (©1905 by Jack London).

He was different from his brothers and sisters. Their hair already betrayed the reddish hue inherited from their mother, the she-wolf, while he alone, in this particular, took after his father. He was the one little gray cub of the litter. He had bred true to the straight wolf-stock—in fact, he had bred true, physically, to old One Eye himself, with but a single exception, and that was he had two eyes to his father's one.

The gray cub's eyes had not been open long, yet already he could see with steady clearness. And while his eyes were still closed, he had felt, tasted, and smelled. He knew his two brothers and his two sisters very well. He had begun to romp with them in a feeble, awkward way, and even to squabble, his little throat vibrating with a queer rasping noise (the forerunner of the growl), as he worked himself into a passion. And long before his eyes had opened, he had learned by touch, taste, and smell to know his mother—a fount of warmth and liquid food and tenderness. She possessed a gentle, caressing tongue that soothed him when it passed over his soft little body, and that impelled him to snuggle close against her and to doze off to sleep.

Most of the first month of his life had been passed thus in sleeping; but now he could see quite well, and he stayed awake for longer periods of time, and

From whose point of view is the passage told?

A. Old One Eye

B. The gray cub

C. An unnamed narrator who mainly describes the feelings and actions of the gray cub

D. An unnamed narrator who describes the thoughts and feelings of each character equally

Sequence	Grade	Question type	DOK level	Reporting category	Correct response
1	6	Selected Response	3	Craft and Structure	C

This selected-response question requires students to understand the point of view from which the passage is told (aligns with the Common Core State Standards College and Career Readiness anchor standard [CCRA] R.6). To answer the question, students must read the entire text carefully to determine from whose point of view the passage is told. Students must be familiar with aspects of narrative point of view and narrative voice. The correct answer is selected among answer options that mistake point of view or misattribute perspective.

**Correct Response**

Only answer option C correctly identifies the point of view as “an unnamed narrator who mainly describes the feelings and actions of the gray cub.” The other points of view presented mistake first person for third person (A, B) or misattribute perspective (D).

**Improvement Idea Statements**

Reporting category	Grade	Low statement (scored below ACT Readiness Range)	High statement (scored at or above ACT Readiness Range)
Craft and Structure	6	As you read, consider the purpose of texts and parts of texts, how texts are structured, how authors use point of view, how context helps determine word meanings, and how authors use words and phrases.	Read as many above grade-level texts as you can, especially informational texts. Analyze how texts are organized, how authors use point of view, and how authors use words and phrases.

## Question 2

**LITERARY NARRATIVE:** This passage is adapted from the novel *White Fang* by Jack London (©1905 by Jack London).

He was different from his brothers and sisters. Their hair already betrayed the reddish hue inherited from their mother, the she-wolf; while he alone, in this particular, took after his father. He was the one little gray cub of the litter. He had bred true to the straight wolf-stock—in fact, he had bred true, physically, to old One Eye himself, with but a single exception, and that was he had two eyes to his father's one.

The gray cub's eyes had not been open long, yet already he could see with steady clearness. And while his eyes were still closed, he had felt, tasted, and smelled. He knew his two brothers and his two sisters very well. He had begun to romp with them in a feeble, awkward way, and even to squabble, his little throat vibrating with a queer rasping noise (the forerunner of the growl), as he worked himself into a passion. And long before his eyes had opened, he had learned by touch, taste, and smell to know his mother—a fount of warmth and liquid food and tenderness. She possessed a gentle, caressing tongue that soothed him when it passed over his soft little body, and that impelled him to snuggle close against her and to doze off to sleep.

Most of the first month of his life had been passed thus in sleeping; but now

According to the passage, what is the one difference between the gray cub and his father?

- A. The gray cub has some red hair.
- B. The gray cub is a wolf.
- C. The gray cub lives in a cave.
- D. The gray cub has two eyes.

Sequence	Grade	Question type	DOK level	Reporting category	Correct response
2	6	Selected Response	1	Key Ideas and Details	D

This selected-response question requires students to understand a contrast between two characters in the text (aligns with CCRA.R.3). To answer the question, students must read the text closely, understand a stated comparative relationship between the gray cub and his father, and distinguish the correct response from answer options that include similarities mistaken for differences and differences for which no textual support exists.

### Correct Response

Only answer option D correctly identifies a difference between the gray cub and his father (the gray cub had two eyes, whereas his father only had one). The other options describe ways in which the gray cub is similar to his father (B, C) or are not supported by the text (A).

### Improvement Idea Statements

Reporting category	Grade	Low statement (scored below ACT Readiness Range)	High statement (scored at or above ACT Readiness Range)
Key Ideas and Details	6	Read as many grade-level texts as you can, focusing on informational texts. Work on reading closely, determining main ideas/themes, and identifying sequences and relationships (comparative, cause/effect).	Read as many above grade-level texts as you can, especially informational texts. Work on making reasonable conclusions and on identifying and inferring main ideas, themes, sequences, and relationships.

### Question 3

The passage introduced in this question is adapted from *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell (©1911 by Barse & Hopkins).

**LITERARY NARRATIVE:** This passage is adapted from the novel *White Fang* by Jack London (©1905 by Jack London).

He was different from his brothers and sisters. Their hair already betrayed the reddish hue inherited from their mother, the she-wolf; while he alone, in this particular, took after his father. He was the one little gray cub of the litter. He had bred true to the straight wolf-stock—in fact, he had bred true, physically, to old One Eye himself, with but a single exception, and that was he had two eyes to his father's one.

The gray cub's eyes had not been open long, yet already he could see with steady clearness. And while his eyes were still closed, he had felt, tasted, and smelled. He knew his two brothers and his two sisters very well. He had begun to romp with them in a feeble, awkward way, and even to squabble, his little throat vibrating with a queer rasping noise (the forerunner of the growl), as he worked himself into a passion. And long before his eyes had opened, he had learned by touch, taste, and smell to know his mother—a fount of warmth and liquid food and tenderness. She possessed a gentle, caressing tongue that soothed him when it passed over his soft little body, and that impelled him to snuggle close against her and to doze off to sleep.

Most of the first month of his life had been passed thus in sleeping; but now

Think about the preceding passage as you read the following excerpt.

The excerpt is narrated by Black Beauty, a horse.

The first place that I can well remember was a large pleasant meadow with a pond of clear water in it. Some shady trees leaned over it, and rushes and water-lilies grew at the deep end. Over the hedge on one side we looked into a plowed field, and on the other we looked over a gate at our master's house, which stood by the roadside; at the top of the meadow was a grove of fir trees, and at the bottom a running brook overhung by a steep bank.

While I was young I lived upon my mother's milk, as I could not eat grass. In the daytime I ran by her side, and at night I lay down close by her. When it was hot we used to stand by the pond in the shade of the trees, and when it was cold we had a nice warm shed near the grove.

—Adapted from *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell (©1911 by Barse & Hopkins)

Identify one way in which the gray cub's life in the passage from *White Fang* differs from the horse's life in the excerpt from *Black Beauty*. Use one detail from the passage and one detail from the excerpt to support your answer.

10000

Sequence	Grade	Question type	DOK level	Reporting category	Correct response
3	6	Constructed Response	3	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	See scoring guide.

This constructed-response task requires students to make cross-text connections between information and ideas in two texts (aligns with CCRA.R.9). Specifically, this task requires students to determine how the life experiences of the narrator of the excerpt (*Black Beauty*) differ from the experiences of the main character in the main passage (the gray cub). Students must read both the passage and the excerpt carefully, compare the information provided in the two texts, and contrast how the experiences of these two characters differed. Students must then construct a written response identifying one difference in the characters' experiences, citing evidence from both the main passage and the excerpt in order to support their answer.

#### Improvement Idea Statements

Reporting category	Grade	Low statement (scored below ACT Readiness Range)	High statement (scored at or above ACT Readiness Range)
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	6	As you read, consider how authors present their arguments. Also read multiple texts with similar topics or similar themes and look for connections between and among these texts.	Read as many above grade-level texts as you can, especially informational texts. Think about how authors construct arguments and support claims. Also, look for connections between and among related texts.

## Scoring Guide

### Synthesis–Compare

Identify one way in which the gray cub’s life in the passage from *White Fang* differs from the horse’s life in the excerpt from *Black Beauty*. Use one detail from the passage and one detail from the excerpt to support your answer.

### Scoring Framework

This Synthesis–Compare task is scored on a 0–3-point scale. A full-credit response includes the following components:

Claim	Evidence
a general statement that tells one difference between the lives of the gray cub and the horse (1 point)	a detail from the passage that supports the claim (1 point)
	a detail from the excerpt that supports the claim (1 point)

### Acceptable Responses

The following chart is not a definitive list of acceptable responses. Other responses will be included in the anchor papers and practice sets.

Claims	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The horse lives outdoors, but the gray cub lives in a cave.</li> <li>▪ The gray cub has brothers and sisters to play with, but the horse plays only with his mother.</li> <li>▪ The horse’s life is more active.</li> <li>▪ The horse can see the outside world, but the gray cub can’t.</li> <li>▪ The horse knows many places, but the gray cub knows only the cave.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The horse lives in a meadow.</li> <li>▪ The horse can enjoy shady trees.</li> <li>▪ The horse has a view of a pond.</li> <li>▪ The gray cub likes to “romp” and “squabble” with the other cubs.</li> <li>▪ The cave is “dim-lighted.”</li> <li>▪ The cave is small.</li> </ul>

### Unacceptable Responses

The following chart is not a definitive list of unacceptable responses. Other responses will be included in the anchor papers and practice sets.

Responses	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One lives in a cave, and the other lives in a meadow.</li> <li>▪ The gray cub runs in the meadow, but the horse lives in a cave.</li> <li>▪ The excerpt is more cheerful than the passage.</li> <li>▪ Both love their mothers.</li> <li>▪ The horse is bigger than the gray cub.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creditable responses must properly identify the horse and the gray cub. Responses that offer pronouns (see first bullet) are not creditable.</li> <li>▪ To earn credit, the response must compare the lives of the two animals. Responses that compare other aspects of the text are not creditable (see third bullet).</li> <li>▪ Only claims of difference are creditable. Claims of similarity, even if accurate, are not creditable (see fourth bullet).</li> </ul>

## Scoring Rubric and Guidelines

Score point	Description and example(s)	Notes
3	<p><b>The answer includes a claim and two pieces of evidence.</b></p> <p><b>EXAMPLE 1</b> The horse lives in beautiful nature. He can enjoy the pond and the trees of the meadow. The gray cub lives in a cave. He can only feel the sunlight from the opening of the cave.</p> <p><b>EXAMPLE 2</b> The horse's life is more active. He runs with his mother. The gray cub sleeps most of the time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A supporting detail must relate logically to the claim, or it does not earn credit.</li> <li>▪ A claim and one or more pieces of evidence can appear in a single statement or sentence. (See Example 3.)</li> <li>▪ Two or more pieces of evidence may offer an implied claim. In this case, the student may earn 1 point for each piece of evidence but no point for the claim. Responses that contain only evidence but no claim may earn a maximum of 2 points. (See Example 4.)</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>The answer includes a claim and one piece of evidence.</b></p> <p><b>EXAMPLE 3</b> The horse goes more places, like down to the pond. The cub stays in the dark but feels the light from outside.</p> <p><b>The answer includes two pieces of evidence.</b></p> <p><b>EXAMPLE 4</b> The horse can see the plowed field, the master's house, and the meadow. The gray cub "had no knowledge of the wide world outside."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supporting details include but aren't limited to facts, figures, quotations, paraphrases, and other information and ideas from the passage.</li> <li>▪ Responses do not have to be in complete sentences or paragraphs. Even a one- or two-word response can receive 1 point. (See Example 6.)</li> <li>▪ If a response gives the same answer or support twice using different words, it only earns 1 point. (See Example 5.)</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>The answer is a single claim.</b></p> <p><b>EXAMPLE 5</b> The horse knows nature but the cub's world is limited. The cub does not know the outside world.</p> <p><b>The answer is a piece of evidence.</b></p> <p><b>EXAMPLE 6</b> Cub=dark cave</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extraneous material in a response, as long as it does not contradict the appropriate response, is not taken into consideration when assigning a score.</li> </ul>
0	<p><b>The answer shows effort but offers neither an acceptable claim, nor acceptable pieces of evidence.</b></p> <p><b>EXAMPLE 7</b> Both play with a family member.</p>	