DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

User Guide for Released Items with Data Tables

Released items are items that were previously used on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA).

Educators may choose to use them to better understand how the MCA is aligned to the Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards and how the items are written to reflect the rigor and complexity of these standards. The released content, data table, and rationales can be used by educators to explore examples of questions that evaluate the knowledge and skills expected in the standards.

Caution: Released items should not be used as a predictor of success on the MCA. The items are only a sampling of the operational item bank and, therefore, do not match the test specifications for the MCA.

Test Content Release Process

In all subject areas, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) must guarantee that the MCA assesses the full depth and breadth of the standards and continues to be statistically valid and reliable before test content can be released. This is a multi-year process that has different considerations by subject. Math items operate independently, while reading and science items require removal of the associated passage set or scenario from use on the MCA. This constraint limits the availability of released items in these content areas.

Accessing Released Items and Passage Sets

To find the released items for Math or Reading, use the subject drop-down menu to make the first selection.

Figure 1. Select Math or Reading released items on the landing page.

To find specific items or passage sets within a subject area, use the drop-down menus to filter for certain criteria, or input keywords in the search field to filter for specific items. Each item ID number (for Math) or passage title (for Reading) is linked to a PDF of the item or passage set. See Figure 2.

Figure 2. Example List of Released Items

For Math, each item is selectable. For Reading, each passage set is selectable (see Figure 5) and consists of the passage and all associated items. Every item for both Math and Reading consists of two pages. The first page of the item (see Figure 3) contains the item image and the ID number. The second page of the item (see Figure 4) shows the ID number, either the rationales for the answer options for multiple choice (MC) items or the correct answer(s) for technology enhanced (TE) items, and a data table showing the percent of students who selected each option for MC items or the percent correct for TE items. Figures 3 and 4 highlight where this information is found in the item PDFs.

Figure 3. Example Page 1 of Math Released Item 230020

Figure 4. Example Page 2 of a Released Item

Item ID

ItemID230020

Rationales

RATIONALE A	One less than 864
RATIONALE B	Correct rounding of 864 down to nearest 10
RATIONALE C	Value in ones place (9) larger than value in ones place for 864, ignores value in tens place (4)
RATIONALE D	Correct.

Data Table

Answer Selected	Percent of Students Who Selected It
A	2%
B	3%
C	2%
D	93%

Item ID: The identification number used to identify the item.

Item Image: This image shows the contents of the item and displays them in a way that is similar (but not always the same) to how the item appeared on the MCA. Reading items are passage-based, and therefore, are found in the passage set PDF after the passage.

Rationales: The rationales describe a possible reason a student may have chosen a particular option. For the correct answer option, either a calculation or an explanation is given. For some TE item types (e.g., fill in the blank or drag-and-drop items) the calculation and examples of accepted correct answers are given for Math, and explanations of the correct answer(s) and the incorrect option(s) are given for Reading.

Data Table: For multiple choice items, the data table shows the percent of students who selected each answer option. Technology enhanced items show the percent of students who answered the item correctly.

Passage Set (Reading only): Each passage set contains the passage text and the items associated with the passage. The passage ID number (UIN), passage type, Lexile, and word count are listed directly underneath the passage. The passage text is then followed by all of its associated items. Each item consists of two pages, the item itself followed by its rationales and a data table. To open the passage set, click on the passage title in the released items list (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Example of Released Reading Passage Set List