

2003

FCAT

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test



G R A D E

7

Reading

S A M P L E T E S T B O O K

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FCAT Sample Test Materials

These sample test materials are designed to help you prepare to answer FCAT questions. These materials introduce you to the kinds of questions you will answer when you take FCAT. The FCAT reading sample test materials for Grade 7 are composed of the books described below:

- ☒ **Sample Test Book**
Includes sample reading passages, a sample test, a sample answer sheet, and instructions for completing the sample test. (Copies are available for all students in the tested grade.)
- ☐ **Sample Answer Key**
Includes answers and explanations for the questions in the sample test. (Copies are available for classroom teachers only.)

☒ = This book

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Hints for Taking the FCAT Reading Test

Here are some hints to help you do your best when you take the FCAT reading test. Keep these hints in mind when you answer the sample questions.

- ✓ Read the directions carefully. Ask your teacher to explain any directions you do not understand.
- ✓ Read the passages and questions very carefully. You may look back at a passage as often as you like.
- ✓ Answer the questions you are sure about first. If a question seems too difficult, skip it and go back to it later.
- ✓ Be sure to fill in the answer bubbles correctly. Do not make any stray marks around answer spaces.
- ✓ Think positively. Some questions may seem hard, but others will be easy.
- ✓ Check each answer to make sure it is the best answer for the question asked.
- ✓ Relax. Some people get nervous about tests. It's natural. Just do your best.

Directions for Taking the Reading Sample Test

This book contains two reading passages, 16 sample questions, and a Sample Answer Sheet. It should take about 30 to 45 minutes to read the passages and answer all the questions. You will mark your answers on the Sample Answer Sheet on page 13 of this book. If you don't understand a question, just ask your teacher to explain it to you. Your teacher has the answers to the sample questions.

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Sample Test Book



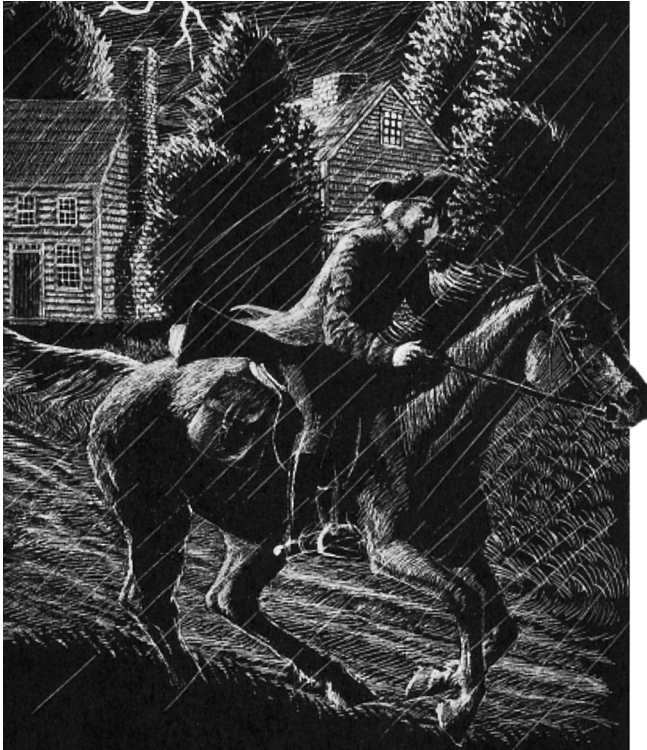
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After you have read each passage, read and answer the questions. Mark your answers on your Sample Answer Sheet, found on page 13.

Read the passage “The Desperate Ride of Caesar Rodney” before answering Numbers 1 through 8.



The Desperate Ride of Caesar Rodney

On July 2, 1776, a resolution for independence was a single vote away from failure. Could one delegate reach Philadelphia in time to cast his vote for freedom?

By Candace Fleming

On a July night in 1776, a dust-covered messenger yanked his horse to a stop in front of a Delaware farmhouse. The messenger leaped from his mount, sprinted to the house, and pounded on the door. He had urgent news for the man inside.

Caesar Rodney opened the door. “They are voting on independence tomorrow, sir,” the messenger breathlessly reported. There was no time to lose. Rodney dressed quickly, then

saddled and mounted a horse. They galloped into the inky darkness toward Philadelphia, eighty miles away.

Since May of 1775, delegates to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia had been debating whether to break away from England. Rodney, one of the three delegates from Delaware, had been in his seat on June 7, 1776, when Henry Lee of Virginia boldly suggested total independence. Rodney quickly backed him.

Several delegates did not agree with Lee, and they angrily flung their arguments at those who pressed for independence. How could the young colonies survive without England’s protection? Wouldn’t England’s army crush the colonies’ untrained militia? Without England to maintain law and order, they insisted, mobs would run wild in the streets. The discussions raged for weeks.

In the heat of the debate, Rodney received an alarming report that a thousand English supporters were rioting near Dover, his hometown. Local authorities begged Rodney to return immediately.

Rodney didn’t want to leave before the Congress voted on independence, but other delegates assured him that the debate would drag on for days. Satisfied, Rodney traveled home only to find that the rioting had ended. Exhausted, he decided to rest overnight before returning to Philadelphia. Rodney had been asleep only a few hours when his much-needed rest was disturbed by the messenger.

As his horse sped across the sleeping Delaware countryside Rodney thought about the situation he was in. He knew it was vital that every colony vote yes when the roll was called for independence.

But the Delaware delegation was split and dangerously close to voting no. One delegate


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was not yet ready to break ties with England, and the second wanted independence. Rodney's vote would decide whether Delaware voted yes or no. If even one colony voted no, the resolution would fail. Fearing the worst, Rodney spurred his horse on.

A fierce thunderstorm broke with the dawn. Lightning flashed and rain poured down, turning the road into a sea of mud. Rodney refused to slow his pace, and by 11 a.m. he was only fifteen miles away. But his horse was exhausted, and Rodney was forced to stop for a fresh mount at a roadside inn. He paced anxiously for thirty excruciating minutes while a horse was saddled. At last Rodney pounded once more toward Philadelphia.

As Rodney rode toward the city, rain slashed at the windowpanes of the Philadelphia statehouse. Inside the assembly room, the air crackled with tension as the delegates listened to arguments for and against independence.

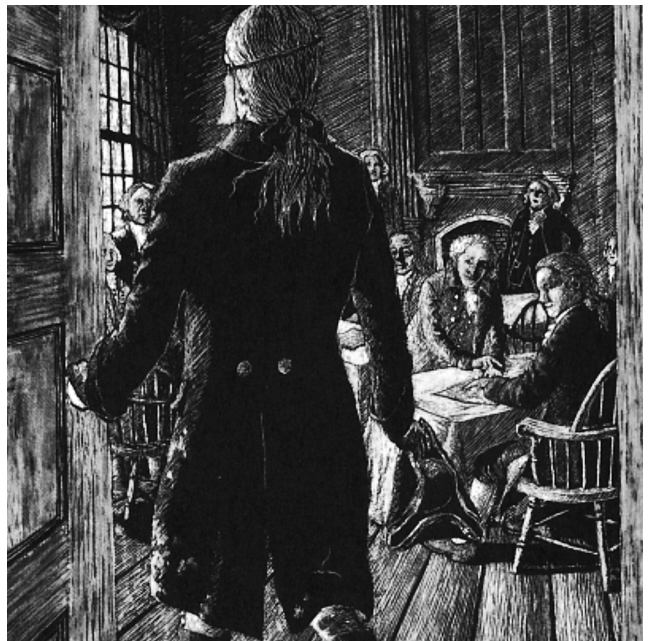
Among them, Thomas Jefferson fidgeted nervously. If Lee's resolution didn't pass, Jefferson's Declaration of Independence would be forgotten. John Adams, who was a strong supporter of independence, sat tight-lipped and silent. Only seventy-year-old Benjamin Franklin looked confident. He felt sure that a vote for independence would come sometime that day.

Finally the debate ended, and the delegates decided to vote after lunch. That afternoon

they returned, and John Hancock, president of the Continental Congress, banged his gavel to quiet the delegates.

Just then, hooves clattered over the cobblestones in front of the statehouse. All eyes turned toward the door. In burst Rodney—dripping wet, spattered with mud, and still wearing his riding boots and spurs.

"He was the oddest looking man in the world—tall, thin, and slender as a reed, with a pale face no bigger than a large apple," John Adams wrote of Rodney's dramatic appearance. "Yet there is sense and fire, spirit, wit, and humor in his countenance." Ignoring the stares, Rodney strode up the aisle and proudly took his seat. Hancock cleared his throat and began to call the vote.



"New Hampshire."

"Aye."

"Massachusetts."

"Aye."

"Rhode Island."

"Aye."

"Pennsylvania."

"Aye."

"Delaware."

Caesar Rodney rose to speak. "As I believe the voice of my constituents and all sensible men are in favor of independence," he said, "I vote for independence."

Rodney's vote broke Delaware's deadlock. The resolution for independence had passed.



Now answer Numbers 1 through 8 on your Sample Answer Sheet on page 13. Base your answers on the passage “The Desperate Ride of Caesar Rodney.”

- 1 Read these sentences from the passage.

All eyes turned toward the door. In burst Rodney—dripping wet, spattered with mud, and still wearing his riding boots and spurs.

Why does the author describe Rodney’s appearance in such detail?

- A. to emphasize that Rodney had ridden through a severe storm
- B. to explain why John Adams described Rodney the way he did
- C. to emphasize that Rodney had no time to spare in getting there
- D. to show how Rodney’s appearance contrasted with his character

- 2 Which pair of words best describes Rodney?

- F. calm and likable
- G. popular and outgoing
- H. confident and impatient
- I. decisive and committed

- 3 How does the author organize the first two paragraphs of the passage?

- A. She gives her opinion of Caesar Rodney’s ride and supports it with historical evidence.
- B. She lists the reasons that Caesar Rodney rode through the night to the statehouse in Philadelphia.
- C. She describes the similarities and differences between the messenger’s ride and Caesar Rodney’s ride.
- D. She tells the events that preceded Caesar Rodney’s ride to Philadelphia in the order in which they occurred.

- 4 What is the main reason that Rodney rushed back to Philadelphia to vote?

- F. He knew the statehouse was eighty miles away.
- G. He found that the riot in his hometown had ended.
- H. He hoped to convince other delegates to vote for independence.
- I. He wanted to be sure that Delaware would vote for independence.

5 What advantage did opponents of independence think England had over the colonies?

- A. a superior army
- B. Delaware's support
- C. dedicated delegates
- D. a stronger assembly

6 Read these sentences from the passage.

But his horse was exhausted, and Rodney was forced to stop for a fresh mount at a roadside inn. He paced anxiously for thirty excruciating minutes while a horse was saddled.

What does *excruciating* mean?

- F. causing fatigue
- G. causing boredom
- H. causing great anger
- I. causing extreme stress

7 Which statement provides the best evidence of Rodney's commitment to the colonies' independence from England?

- A. Rodney returned to assist his hometown during a riot.
- B. Rodney braved a severe thunderstorm in order to vote.
- C. Rodney's ride continued despite his horse's exhaustion.
- D. Rodney's vote would decide which way Delaware voted.

8 Which sentence gives the best summary of the passage?

- F. Rodney is called home to take care of rioting, leaves the assembly to return home, and then discovers that the rioting has ended.
- G. Rodney supports independence from England, returns to his home to take care of a riot, and then receives a message that it is time to vote.
- H. Rodney is summoned to Philadelphia to vote for independence, rides all night and morning, and arrives in Philadelphia the following afternoon.
- I. Rodney is called away during the debate over independence, is summoned back, and returns just in time to vote for independence.

Read the article “Lightning” before answering Numbers 9 through 16.



Lightning

By Sandra Markle

The puffy, cumulus cloud begins to billow up. The top spreads into an anvil head as the cloud thickens and darkens, becoming a cumulonimbus cloud. The wind begins to blow harder, and raindrops pelt the ground. Then, suddenly, a jagged streak of light slices across the sky. Thunder cracks explosively and trails off into a deep rumble. It's a thunderstorm, and that lightning bolt was only one of six hundred flashes that occur somewhere in the world every second. Of

these, about one hundred strike the earth. Lightning is misunderstood, underrated as a dangerous phenomenon, and unappreciated for the important way it helps the environment.

In 1752 Ben Franklin proved that lightning was electricity. He launched a kite with a metal rod at its tip into a cumulonimbus cloud. The kite string was silk, a very good conductor of electricity, and when the lightning flashed, Franklin touched the metal key tied to the string. The results were shocking. An average bolt of lightning packs more than fifteen million volts of electricity—enough to light one million light bulbs.

Today scientists know that what happens in a cumulonimbus cloud is similar to what happens when you scuff across a wool carpet and touch something, getting a shock. You may even see a spark, a miniature lightning bolt, when this happens. All matter is made up of tiny atoms, and atoms are made up of even tinier negatively and positively charged particles. When friction knocks the negatively charged particles free, they collect on objects. Like opposite poles of a magnet, the opposite charges attract.

Strong updrafts of warm air into colder air batter water droplets, causing the cloud to become electrified. Particles with a positive charge collect in the highest layers. Negatively charged particles collect in the lower portion of the cloud. As a thunderstorm approaches, these negative charges set up an attraction with positive charges on the ground.

At first the air acts as an insulator, preventing charged particles from leaping between the earth and the cloud. Eventually the attraction becomes too great. An invisible finger of negatively charged particles shoots down from the cloud, seeking the quickest

path to the ground. Then the positively charged particles leap up to meet the negative charges, forming an electrified channel that may be as thin as a wire or as thick as a cable. Lightning appears to shoot down from the sky, but slow-motion photography has proved that the bolt actually illuminates from the ground up.

All of this action lasts only a fraction of a second, but the surge of power generates a burst of heat. The explosive expansion of superheated air creates sound waves—thunder. Since lightning travels at the speed of light—about 186,000 miles per second (300,000 kilometers per second)—and sound travels only 1 mile (1.6 kilometers) in five seconds, it really is possible to estimate how many miles (kilometers) away a storm is. Count the number of seconds between the time you see the lightning flash and when you first hear the crack of thunder. Then divide this by five. This will tell you how many miles away the storm is. Multiply the number of miles by 1.6 to find out how many kilometers this represents.

Thunderstorms happen most frequently during the spring and summer because it is then that the Earth's heat is most uneven. If you live on the island of Java, you have a lot of opportunities to practice figuring how far away the storm is. Lightning flashes there about three hundred days a year. Florida is the most lightning-prone state in the United States, averaging two thunderstorms a week.

Although lightning may seem to be gone in a flash, it does have an important long-lasting effect. Plants need nitrogen to grow. While there is plenty of it in the air, plants can't use it in this gaseous form. Lightning causes the gaseous nitrogen to form nitrogenous compounds that are carried to the soil by the rain. So the next time there is a thunderstorm with plenty of lightning, notice whether the grass and other plants in your neighborhood seem to have a sudden growth spurt after the storm. It isn't just the rain. The lightning provided a natural dose of fertilizer.



Now answer Numbers 9 through 16 on your Sample Answer Sheet on page 13. Base your answers on the article “Lightning.”

9 What is the main idea of the last paragraph of the article?

- A. Plants need rain to grow.
- B. Plants need nitrogen to grow.
- C. Nitrogen in the atmosphere is invisible.
- D. Lightning has positive effects on plants.

10 Read this sentence from the article.

At first the air acts as an insulator, preventing charged particles from leaping between the earth and the cloud.

An *insulator* is a material that

- F. creates electricity.
- G. blocks electricity.
- H. removes electricity.
- I. conducts electricity.

11 Which feature of lightning does the author emphasize most in this article?

- A. its causes
- B. its danger
- C. its history
- D. its purposes

12 What information did scientists learn by using slow-motion photography to study lightning?

- F. the direction that the visible bolt travels
- G. why lightning is more common in summer
- H. the type of particles that the visible bolt contains
- I. why lightning tends to come from cumulonimbus clouds

- 13** Why is a thunderstorm with more lightning better for growing plants than one with less lightning?
- A. Lightning occurs most frequently in overgrown areas.
 - B. The heat from lightning causes a growth spurt in plants.
 - C. The energy from lightning striking the earth is very powerful.
 - D. Lightning changes nitrogen in the air to a form plants can use.
- 14** Which kind of evidence does the author use most in this article?
- F. She provides scientific facts about lightning.
 - G. She relates her personal experiences with lightning.
 - H. She gives her opinions about heat generated by thunder.
 - I. She relies on the reader's common knowledge of thunderstorms.
- 15** The frequency with which thunderstorms happen is affected by
- A. the speed of wind high above the ground.
 - B. the amount of charged particles on the Earth.
 - C. the degree to which the Earth's heat is irregular.
 - D. the strength of electricity contained in their clouds.
- 16** People who read this article will learn the procedure for estimating
- F. the voltage of lightning strikes.
 - G. how long a lightning strike lasts.
 - H. the frequency of lightning strikes.
 - I. how far away a lightning strike occurs.



This is the end of the Reading Sample Test.
Until time is called, go back and check your work or answer questions you did not complete. When you have finished, close your test book.

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Name _____

Answer all the questions that appear in the Reading Sample Test on this Answer Sheet.

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