

English Language Arts Assessment  
Task 2 Form A

Directions:

In this part of the test you are going to read an article called "Mrs. McCarron" and a poem called "An Old Woman of the Roads." First you will answer questions and write about what you have read. You may look back at the story and the poem as often as you like. Then you will be asked to write an essay.

Now turn the page and begin.

Note: This is a story that takes place in Ireland during the famine in the 1840s. At that time, many people lived only on potatoes. When the potato crop was ruined, there was no food. People also did not have money to pay their rent, so many were evicted. The landlords destroyed their little houses, and the people had to live outdoors. Donegal and Mayo are counties in the west of Ireland where people suffered greatly during the famine. Wattles are long rods or branches that were used to frame the little huts that people built for themselves after they were evicted.

Mrs. McCarron

There was a large number of homeless people from famine-stricken areas in Donegal and Mayo in this district. Many of them became beggarmen and beggarwomen.

An old woman called McCarron and her family were evicted. She had no home, so she went to an old graveyard - Errigal, and in one corner, she built a hut of sods and wattles for herself and her children.

Another beggarwoman and two children came to a house in this locality asking alms. When the children came to the door, they saw pigs in the sty eating food. The children ran over to the trough and started to eat the pigs' food because they were so hungry.

(from Cathal Póirtéir, Famine Echoes, 241)

Complete the chart with words or phrases that describe Mrs. McCarron's character. Identity information from the article that supports each character trait.

	CHARACTER TRAIT	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
1.		
2.		
3.		

What happened to many people during the famine? What did they do? Explain your answer using details from this article.

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Read Padraic Colum's poem "An Old Woman of the Roads." What do you think happened to the old woman? What things mean home to her? Use details from the poem to support your answer.

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Choose a line or lines from the poem. Discuss the meaning of your selection and explain how it applies to "Mrs. McCarron." Use ideas from BOTH the poem and the article in your answer.

In your answer, be sure to include:

- \* the line or lines you have selected from the poem.
- \* an explanation of how your selection applies to "Mrs. McCarron."

Check your writing for correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.