The *Praxis*® Study Companion

Middle School English Language Arts

5047

Welcome to *The Praxis® Study Companion*

Prepare to Show What You Know

You have been working to acquire the knowledge and skills you need for your teaching career. Now you are ready to demonstrate your abilities by taking a *Praxis®* test.

Using the *Praxis® Study Companion* is a smart way to prepare for the test so you can do your best on test day. This guide can help keep you on track and make the most efficient use of your study time.

The Study Companion contains practical information and helpful tools, including:

- An overview of the *Praxis* tests
- Specific information on the *Praxis* test you are taking
- A template study plan
- Study topics
- Practice questions and explanations of correct answers
- Test-taking tips and strategies
- Frequently asked questions
- Links to more detailed information

So where should you start? Begin by reviewing this guide in its entirety and note those sections that you need to revisit. Then you can create your own personalized study plan and schedule based on your individual needs and how much time you have before test day.

Keep in mind that study habits are individual. There are many different ways to successfully prepare for your test. Some people study better on their own, while others prefer a group dynamic. You may have more energy early in the day, but another test taker may concentrate better in the evening. So use this guide to develop the approach that works best for you.

Your teaching career begins with preparation. Good luck!

Know What to Expect

Which tests should I take?

Each state or agency that uses the *Praxis* tests sets its own requirements for which test or tests you must take for the teaching area you wish to pursue.

Before you register for a test, confirm your state or agency's testing requirements at **www.ets.org/praxis/states**.

How are the *Praxis* tests given?

Praxis tests are given on computer. Other formats are available for test takers approved for accommodations (see page 52).

What should I expect when taking the test on computer?

When taking the test on computer, you can expect to be asked to provide proper identification at the test center. Once admitted, you will be given the opportunity to learn how the computer interface works (how to answer questions, how to skip questions, how to go back to questions you skipped, etc.) before the testing time begins. Watch the **What to Expect on Test Day** video to see what the experience is like.

Where and when are the *Praxis* tests offered?

You can select the test center that is most convenient for you. The *Praxis* tests are administered through an international network of test centers, which includes Prometric® Testing Centers, some universities, and other locations throughout the world.

Testing schedules may differ, so see the *Praxis* web site for more detailed test registration information at **www. ets.org/praxis/register**.

Table of Contents

The Praxis® Study Companion guides you through the steps to success

1. Learn About Your Test

Learn about the specific test you will be taking

Middle School English Language Arts (5047)

Test at a Glance	
Test Name	Middle School English Language Arts
Test Code	5047
Time	160 minutes: 130 minutes for the selected-response (SR) section and 30 minutes for the constructed-response (CR) section
Number of Questions	110 SR questions and 2 CR questions
Format	The SR section, which accounts for 75% of the total test score, consists of single-selection multiple-choice questions with four answer choices, as well as innovative question types, which may include multiple-selection multiple-choice, order/match, audio stimulus, table/grid, select-in-passage, and video stimulus. The CR section accounts for 25% of the total test score.
Test Delivery	Computer delivered

	Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of Examination
	I. Reading	50 SR and 1 CR*	46%
	II. Language Use and Vocabulary	16 SR	11%
	III. Writing, Speaking, and Listening	26 SR	18%
	IV. English Language Arts Instruction	18 SR and 1 CR*	25%

* On your score report, points earned on the CR questions are reported separately from points earned on the SR questions.

About This Test

The Middle School English Language Arts test measures whether prospective middle school English language arts teachers have the knowledge, skills, and abilities believed necessary for competent professional practice. The test is aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts and informed by the Early Adolescence/English Language Arts Standards from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and by the Standards for Initial Preparation of Teachers of Secondary English Language Arts, developed by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). It measures examinees' skills and knowledge of concepts relevant to four content categories: reading, including the study of literature (e.g., stories, drama, and poetry) and informational texts (e.g., essays, biographies, and speeches); use of the English language, including conventions of standard English and vocabulary development; writing, speaking, and listening; and English language arts instruction.

Most of the 110 selected-response questions, which will address all four of the content categories, are traditional four-option selected-response questions with one correct answer. However, some innovative question types are also used.

Examples include the following:

- multiple-selection multiple-choice questions, which have five or more answer choices and one or more correct answers
- order/match questions, in which you categorize words or phrases by dragging them from a list into the appropriate boxes
- audio or video stimulus questions, in which you respond to a short audio or video clip instead of, or in addition to, a written passage
- table/grid questions, in which you click on a box or boxes in a grid to select your answer(s)
- select-in-passage questions, in which you choose your answer by clicking on a section of a passage to highlight it

The two constructed-response (CR) questions, or short essays, also address the first and fourth content categories, reading and English language arts instruction. The first CR question asks you to interpret a piece of literature or informational text; the second asks you to discuss approaches to teaching reading or writing, given a particular student writing sample or classroom context.

This test may contain some questions that will not count toward your score.

Test Specifications

Test specifications describe the knowledge and skills measured by the test. Study topics to help you prepare to answer test questions can be found on page 34.

I. Reading

A. General Knowledge

1. Knows the major works, authors, and contexts of United States, British, and World literature appropriate for adolescents
    a. identifies the authors and titles of major works of fiction, poetry, drama, and literary nonfiction appropriate for adolescents
    b. identifies the historical or literary context of major works of fiction, poetry, drama, and literary nonfiction appropriate for adolescents

2. Understands the defining characteristics of literary genres (e.g., poetry, literary nonfiction, drama)
    a. identifies typical characteristics of a genre
    b. applies correct terminology for a genre (e.g., stanza versus paragraph)
    c. compares and contrasts different genres

3. Knows the defining characteristics of major subgenres (e.g., sonnet, historical fiction, functional text)
    a. identifies characteristics of subgenres through distinctions in form or content (e.g., sonnets versus ballads, satire versus realism)
    b. differentiates between two subgenres (e.g., historical fiction and science fiction)

B. Literature

1. Understands how literal and inferential interpretations of a literary text can be supported with textual evidence
    a. comprehends the literal meaning of a text
    b. draws inferences from a text
    c. determines the textual evidence that supports an analysis of what a text says or implies

2. Understands how a theme is developed within and across works from a wide variety of literary genres and other media
    a. identifies the theme of a given text
    b. analyzes how a theme is developed throughout one or more works
    c. recognizes universal themes from myths, traditional stories, or religious works and how they are rendered or alluded to in contemporary works

3. Understands how literary elements (e.g., characterization, setting, plot development) contribute to the meaning of a text
    a. analyzes the impact of differences in the points of view of characters and readers
    b. analyzes the structure of a plot
    c. analyzes how setting contributes to mood, tone, and conflict
    d. analyzes how particular lines of dialogue or story events impact meaning
    e. analyzes the text for the use of indirect and direct characterization

4. Understands how word choice (e.g., figurative, connotative, or informal language) contributes to the meaning and tone of a literary text

   a. distinguishes between connotation and denotation in a text

   b. identifies examples of various types of figurative language (e.g., extended metaphor, imagery, hyperbole)

   c. distinguishes between what is directly stated in a text and what is meant (e.g., satire, irony, understatement)

   d. determines the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meaning

   e. analyzes the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone

5. Understands how poetic devices and structure contribute to the meaning of a poem

   a. analyzes how poetic devices (e.g. rhyme scheme, rhythm, figurative language) contribute to the meaning of a poem

   b. analyzes how the structure of a poem contributes to its meaning

6. Understands literacy skills to support active reading of a literary text (e.g., making predictions, making connections with the text, summarizing)

   a. identifies literacy skills to support active reading (e.g., text-to-self connection, prediction, summarizing)

   b. evaluates a summary of a passage

   c. evaluates the strength of a prediction based on textual evidence

C. Informational Texts and Rhetoric

1. Understands how literal and inferential interpretations of an informational text can be supported with textual evidence

   a. comprehends the literal meaning of a text

   b. draws inferences from a text

   c. determines the textual evidence that supports an analysis of what a text says or implies

   d. compares two or more texts that provide conflicting facts or perspectives on the same topic

2. Knows a variety of organizational patterns that can be used to develop a central idea in an informational text

   a. identifies the central idea of a text

   b. analyzes how an author develops or refines a central idea in a text

   c. identifies the organizational pattern of a text (e.g., problem-solution, cause-effect, chronological order)

   d. analyzes how ideas are connected to and distinguished from one another in a text

3. Understands how word choice (e.g., figurative, connotative, or technical language) contributes to the meaning and tone of an informational text

   a. distinguishes between connotation and denotation in a text

   b. identifies the purpose of technical language in a text

   c. distinguishes between what is directly stated in an informational text and what is meant (e.g., satire, irony, understatement)

4. Understands methods that authors use to convey purpose and perspective in informational texts

   a. determines an author's point of view or purpose

   b. analyzes how an author uses rhetoric to support the point of view or purpose of a text

II. Language Use and Vocabulary

1. Understands the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, syntax, and mechanics (e.g., sentence types, verb tenses, punctuation)

   a. explains the function of different parts of speech

   b. identifies errors in standard English grammar, usage, syntax, and mechanics (e.g., inconsistent verb tense, nonparallel structure)

   c. justifies grammar, usage, syntax, and mechanics choices (e.g., colon versus semicolon, its versus it's, saw versus seen)

   d. identifies examples of different sentence types (e.g., simple, compound, compound-complex)

2. Understands the use of affixes, context, and syntax to determine word meaning

 a. applies knowledge of affixes to determine word meaning

 b. uses context clues to determine word meaning

 c. applies knowledge of syntax to determine word meaning

3. Understands the use of print and digital reference materials to support correct language usage

 a. determines the most appropriate print or digital reference material for a particular language usage task

4. Is familiar with variation in dialect and diction across regions, cultural groups, and time periods

 a. identifies variation in dialect and diction across regions, cultural groups, and time periods

III. Writing, Speaking, and Listening

1. Understands the distinct characteristics of various types of writing (e.g., argumentative, informative/explanatory, narrative)

 a. distinguishes among common types of writing

 b. identifies examples of common types of writing

 c. identifies typical characteristics of a type of writing

2. Understands that effective writing is appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience

 a. identifies the task, purpose, or intended audience for a piece of writing

 b. chooses the most appropriate type of writing for a particular task, purpose, or audience

 c. evaluates the effectiveness of a particular piece of writing for a specific task, purpose, or audience

3. Understands the characteristics of clear and coherent writing (e.g., development, organization, style)

 a. identifies details that help to develop a main idea

 b. organizes parts of a text clearly and coherently

 c. chooses appropriate transitions

 d. justifies stylistic choices within a clear and coherent piece of writing

4. Knows effective research practices, including evaluating the credibility of multiple print and digital sources, gathering relevant information, and citing sources accurately

 a. identifies relevant information during research on a given topic

 b. evaluates the credibility of a print or digital source

 c. identifies effective research practices

 d. interprets a citation of a print or digital source

 e. applies appropriate documentation techniques when quoting or paraphrasing source material to avoid plagiarism

5. Understands the effective delivery of a speech or presentation (e.g., eye contact, visual aids, tone)

 a. identifies characteristics of effective delivery of a speech or presentation

 b. evaluates the integration of multimedia components or visual displays in a particular presentation

 c. evaluates the advantages and disadvantages of using different media to present ideas

6. Understands methods that authors use to appeal to a specific audience

 a. identifies methods of appeal or persuasion (e.g., expert opinion, generalization, testimonial)

 b. evaluates the effectiveness of an author's methods of appeal

7. Understands what constitutes an effective written argument with strong supporting evidence

 a. evaluates the argument and specific claims in an expository or persuasive text

 b. assesses whether an author's reasoning is sound

 c. assesses whether evidence is relevant, factual, and sufficient

IV.   English Language Arts Instruction

1. Knows commonly used research-based approaches to supporting language acquisition and vocabulary development for diverse learners

    a. recognizes approaches to supporting language acquisition or vocabulary development

    b. evaluates the effectiveness of specific approaches to supporting language acquisition or vocabulary development

    c. interprets research and applies it to particular instructional challenges related to language acquisition or vocabulary development

2. Knows techniques for instructing students to participate productively in collaborative discussions (e.g., one-on-one, in groups, teacher-led) and listen actively

    a. identifies a variety of techniques for instructing students to participate productively in collaborative discussions and listen actively (e.g., selecting age-appropriate topics, facilitating appropriate discussion behavior, ensuring accountability)

    b. evaluates the effectiveness of specific techniques for achieving particular discussion goals

3. Knows techniques for instructing students to communicate effectively and appropriately using technological tools (e.g., presentation software, blogs, wikis)

    a. identifies a variety of techniques for instructing students to communicate effectively and appropriately using technological tools

    b. evaluates the effectiveness of specific technology-based techniques for achieving particular communication goals

4. Knows commonly used research-based approaches to grouping and differentiated instruction to meet specific instructional objectives in English Language Arts (e.g., literature circles, peer conferencing, collaborating with educators of exceptional/special needs or linguistically diverse children)

    a. identifies approaches to grouping or differentiated instruction to meet specific instructional objectives in English Language Arts

    b. evaluates the effectiveness of specific grouping or differentiation approaches for achieving particular instructional goals

5. Is familiar with approaches to choosing texts for students based on ability and interests

    a. identifies approaches to choosing texts for students based on ability and interests

6. Understands commonly used research-based strategies for teaching adolescent reading (e.g., activating prior knowledge, modeling metacognitive practices)

    a. recognizes commonly used research-based strategies for teaching adolescent reading

    b. evaluates the effectiveness of specific strategies to support a particular reading task

    c. interprets research and applies it to particular reading instruction challenges

7. Understands commonly used research-based approaches to teaching components of writing (e.g., writing workshop, modeling)

    a. recognizes commonly used research-based approaches to teaching components of writing

    b. evaluates the effectiveness of specific strategies to support a particular writing task

    c. interprets research and applies it to particular writing instruction challenges

8. Knows approaches to and purposes of formative and summative assessment of reading, writing, speaking, and listening (e.g., use of rubrics, conferencing techniques, providing useful feedback)

    a. recognizes a variety of approaches to and purposes of formative and summative assessment of reading, writing, speaking, and listening

    b. evaluates the effectiveness of a variety of approaches to formative and summative assessment of reading, writing, speaking, and listening

    c. interprets research and applies it to particular assessment challenges

9. Knows effective approaches to incorporating student input into the design and use of English Language Arts curriculum and assessments (e.g., literature selection, collaboratively designed rubrics)

   a. identifies approaches to gathering student input, feedback, and reflection that motivate students and support the development of an effective learning environment

   b. identifies approaches to helping students become monitors of their own work and growth in speaking, listening, writing, reading, enacting, and viewing

Constructed-Response Topics

Question 1: Textual Interpretation

Stimulus

The stimulus for the literary analysis question will consist of a selection of prose (fiction or nonfiction) OR poetry (a whole short poem or an excerpt from a longer work).

Task

Examinees will be asked to do both of the following:

- Describe and give examples of the use of one or two specified literary element(s) present in the stimulus: e.g., metaphor, simile, voice, narrative point of view, tone, style, setting, diction, mood, allusion, irony, cliche, analogy, hyperbole, personification, alliteration, foreshadowing
- Discuss how the author's use of the literary element(s) contributes to the overall meaning and/or effectiveness of the text

Question 2: Teaching Reading/Writing

Stimulus

The stimulus for the teaching reading/writing question will consist of a piece of student work OR a classroom situation.

Task

Examinees may be asked to do any of the following:

- Analyze a piece of student work or a classroom situation to determine strengths and/or weaknesses
- Describe an instructional activity referencing the identified strengths and/or weaknesses

2. Familiarize Yourself with Test Questions

Become comfortable with the types of questions you'll find on the Praxis *tests*

The *Praxis* assessments include a variety of question types: constructed response (for which you write a response of your own); selected response, for which you select one or more answers from a list of choices or make another kind of selection (e.g., by clicking on a sentence in a text or by clicking on part of a graphic); and numeric entry, for which you enter a numeric value in an answer field. You may be familiar with these question formats from taking other standardized tests. If not, familiarize yourself with them so you don't spend time during the test figuring out how to answer them.

Understanding Computer-Delivered Questions

Questions on computer-delivered tests are interactive in the sense that you answer by selecting an option or entering text on the screen. If you see a format you are not familiar with, read the directions carefully. The directions always give clear instructions on how you are expected to respond.

For most questions, you respond by clicking an oval to select a single answer from a list of answer choices.

However, interactive question types may also ask you to respond by:

- **Clicking more than one oval** to select answers from a list of choices.
- **Typing in an entry box.** When the answer is a number, you may be asked to enter a numerical answer. Some questions may have more than one place to enter a response.
- **Clicking check boxes.** You may be asked to click check boxes instead of an oval when more than one choice within a set of answers can be selected.
- **Clicking parts of a graphic.** In some questions, you will select your answers by clicking on a location (or locations) on a graphic such as a map or chart, as opposed to choosing your answer from a list.
- **Clicking on sentences.** In questions with reading passages, you may be asked to choose your answers by clicking on a sentence (or sentences) within the reading passage.
- **Dragging and dropping answer choices into targets on the screen.** You may be asked to select answers from a list of choices and drag your answers to the appropriate location in a table, paragraph of text or graphic.
- **Selecting answer choices from a drop-down menu.** You may be asked to choose answers by selecting choices from a drop-down menu (e.g., to complete a sentence).

Remember that with every question you will get clear instructions.

Perhaps the best way to understand computer-delivered questions is to view the [Computer-delivered Testing Demonstration](#) on the Praxis web site to learn how a computer-delivered test works and see examples of some types of questions you may encounter.

Understanding Selected-Response Questions

Many selected-response questions begin with the phrase "which of the following." Take a look at this example:

Which of the following is a flavor made from beans?

(A) Strawberry

(B) Cherry

(C) Vanilla

(D) Mint

How would you answer this question?

All of the answer choices are flavors. Your job is to decide which of the flavors is the one made from beans.

Try following these steps to select the correct answer.

1) **Limit your answer to the choices given.** You may know that chocolate and coffee are also flavors made from beans, but they are not listed. Rather than thinking of other possible answers, focus only on the choices given ("which of the following").

2) **Eliminate incorrect answers.** You may know that strawberry and cherry flavors are made from fruit and that mint flavor is made from a plant. That leaves vanilla as the only possible answer.

3) **Verify your answer.** You can substitute "vanilla" for the phrase "which of the following" and turn the question into this statement: "Vanilla is a flavor made from beans." This will help you be sure that your answer is correct. If you're still uncertain, try substituting the other choices to see if they make sense. You may want to use this technique as you answer selected-response questions on the practice tests.

Try a more challenging example

The vanilla bean question is pretty straightforward, but you'll find that more challenging questions have a similar structure. For example:

Entries in outlines are generally arranged according to which of the following relationships of ideas?

(A) Literal and inferential

(B) Concrete and abstract

(C) Linear and recursive

(D) Main and subordinate

You'll notice that this example also contains the phrase "which of the following." This phrase helps you determine that your answer will be a "relationship of ideas" from the choices provided. You are supposed to find the choice that describes how entries, or ideas, in outlines are related.

Sometimes it helps to put the question in your own words. Here, you could paraphrase the question in this way: "How are outlines usually organized?" Since the ideas in outlines usually appear as main ideas and subordinate ideas, the answer is (D).

QUICK TIP: Don't be intimidated by words you may not understand. It might be easy to be thrown by words like "recursive" or "inferential." Read carefully to understand the question and look for an answer that fits. An outline is something you are probably familiar with and expect to teach to your students. So slow down, and use what you know.

Watch out for selected-response questions containing "NOT," "LEAST," and "EXCEPT"

This type of question asks you to select the choice that does not fit. You must be very careful because it is easy to forget that you are selecting the negative. This question type is used in situations in which there are several good solutions or ways to approach something, but also a clearly wrong way.

How to approach questions about graphs, tables, or reading passages

When answering questions about graphs, tables, or reading passages, provide only the information that the questions ask for. In the case of a map or graph, you might want to read the questions first, and then look at the map or graph. In the case of a long reading passage, you might want to go ahead and read the passage first, noting places you think are important, and then answer the questions. Again, the important thing is to be sure you answer the questions as they refer to the material presented. So read the questions carefully.

How to approach unfamiliar formats

New question formats are developed from time to time to find new ways of assessing knowledge. Tests may include audio and video components, such as a movie clip or animation, instead of a map or reading passage. Other tests may allow you to zoom in on details in a graphic or picture.

Tests may also include interactive questions. These questions take advantage of technology to assess knowledge and skills in ways that standard selected-response questions cannot. If you see a format you are not familiar with, **read the directions carefully**. The directions always give clear instructions on how you are expected to respond.

QUICK TIP: Don't make the questions more difficult than they are. Don't read for hidden meanings or tricks. There are no trick questions on *Praxis* tests. They are intended to be serious, straightforward tests of your knowledge.

Understanding Constructed-Response Questions

Constructed-response questions require you to demonstrate your knowledge in a subject area by creating your own response to particular topics. Essays and short-answer questions are types of constructed-response questions.

For example, an essay question might present you with a topic and ask you to discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the opinion stated. You must support your position with specific reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

Take a look at a few sample essay topics:

- "Celebrities have a tremendous influence on the young, and for that reason, they have a responsibility to act as role models."
- "We are constantly bombarded by advertisements—on television and radio, in newspapers and magazines, on highway signs, and the sides of buses. They have become too pervasive. It's time to put limits on advertising."
- "Advances in computer technology have made the classroom unnecessary, since students and teachers are able to communicate with one another from computer terminals at home or at work."

Keep these things in mind when you respond to a constructed-response question

1) **Answer the question accurately.** Analyze what each part of the question is asking you to do. If the question asks you to describe or discuss, you should provide more than just a list.

2) **Answer the question completely.** If a question asks you to do three distinct things in your response, you should cover all three things for the best score. Otherwise, no matter how well you write, you will not be awarded full credit.

3) **Answer the question that is asked.** Do not change the question or challenge the basis of the question. You will receive no credit or a low score if you answer another question or if you state, for example, that there is no possible answer.

4) **Give a thorough and detailed response.** You must demonstrate that you have a thorough understanding of the subject matter. However, your response should be straightforward and not filled with unnecessary information.

5) **Reread your response.** Check that you have written what you thought you wrote. Be sure not to leave sentences unfinished or omit clarifying information.

QUICK TIP: You may find that it helps to take notes on scratch paper so that you don't miss any details. Then you'll be sure to have all the information you need to answer the question.
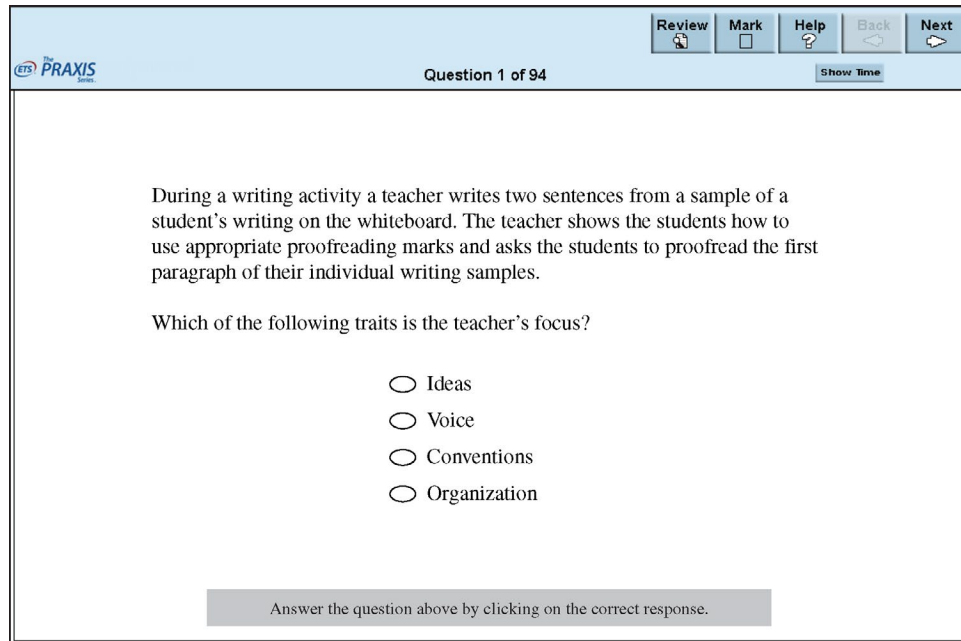
For tests that have constructed-response questions, more detailed information can be found on page 5.

3. Practice with Sample Test Questions

Answer practice questions and find explanations for correct answers

Sample Test Questions

This test is available via computer delivery. To illustrate what the computer-delivered test looks like, the following sample question shows an actual screen used in a computer-delivered test. For the purposes of this guide, sample questions are provided as they would appear in a paper-delivered test.

Selected-Response Questions

The sample questions that follow illustrate some kinds of selected-response questions on the test. They are not, however, representative of the entire scope of the test in either content or difficulty. Answers with explanations follow the questions.

Directions: For each question indicate the best answer(s), using the directions given.

1. Set in the American Civil War, the novel concerns a young soldier's first encounter with battle and the psychological changes that he undergoes. Published in 1895, the novel had a great influence on 20th-century fiction.

   The novel discussed above is

   (A) Andrea Davis Pinkney's *Silent Thunder*

   (B) Gary Paulsen's *Soldier's Heart*

   (C) Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*

   (D) Carolyn Reeder's *Shades of Gray*

2. _____ is a narrative that takes abstract ideas of behavior—good or bad, wise or foolish—and attempts to make them concrete and striking. The chief actor in these stories is usually an animal or inanimate object that behaves like a human and engages in a single significant act intended to teach a moral lesson.

   Which of the following will correctly complete the passage above?

   (A) A myth

   (B) A fable

   (C) An epic

   (D) A legend

3. Identify which of the following characteristics apply to each of the two poetic forms.

   For each characteristic, choose <u>one</u> poetic form.

Characteristic	Haiku	Limerick
Composed of 17 syllables		
Composed of 5 lines of verse		
Often has a nonsensical theme		
Follows a strict rhyme scheme		
Often focused on nature		

4. RUTH. Well—(*She waits a long time and then with resignation starts to put away the laundry.*) I guess I might as well go on to bed—(*more or less to herself*) I don't know where we lost it—but we have . . .

   > —Lorraine Hansberry,
   > from *A Raisin in the Sun*

   Which portion of the excerpted text provides an example of an aside?

   (A) "Well—"

   (B) "I guess I might as well go on to bed—"

   (C) "(more or less to herself)"

   (D) "I don't know where we lost it—but we have . . ."

Questions 5-8 refer to the following two poems.

Spellbound

The night is darkening round me,
The wild winds coldly blow;
But a tyrant spell has bound me
And I cannot, cannot go.

Line (5) The giant trees are bending
Their bare boughs weighed with snow.
And the storm is fast descending,
And yet I cannot go.

Clouds beyond clouds above me,
(10) Wastes beyond wastes below;
But nothing drear can move me;
I will not, cannot go.

—Emily Brontë

Approach of Winter

The half-stripped trees
struck by a wind together,
bending all,
the leaves flutter drily
Line (5) and refuse to let go
or driven like hail
stream bitterly out to one side
and fall
where the salvias, hard carmine,—
(10) like no leaf that ever was—
edge the bare garden.

—William Carlos Williams

5. Which of the following interpretations best applies to both poems?

   (A) They portray winter as a time of waiting for the first signs of spring.

   (B) They liken the coming of winter to the shock of sudden death.

   (C) They describe acts of resistance against the powerful force of winter.

   (D) They relate the harshness of winter to the darkness of night.

6. In "Spellbound," the speaker's change in tone from the first to the third stanza can best be described as shifting from

   (A) helpless to stubborn

   (B) apathetic to passionate

   (C) despondent to hopeful

   (D) agitated to complacent

7. Which of the following statements best describes how the structure of "Spellbound" contributes to its meaning?

   (A) The use of rhyming quatrains contrasts with the chaos of the storm.

   (B) The use of blank verse strengthens the effect of the "tyrant spell."

   (C) The breaks between stanzas symbolize moments of regret.

   (D) The lack of internal punctuation reflects a sense of anticipation.

8. Which of the following literary devices are present in "Approach of Winter"?

   Select <u>all</u> that apply.

   (A) Allusion

   (B) Repetition

   (C) Oxymoron

   (D) Personification

   (E) Simile

9. Which of the following approaches is most effective in supporting vocabulary development for English-language learners?

   (A) Having students memorize a list of words and definitions every week

   (B) Introducing students to words in context through the use of engaging literature

   (C) Introducing students to new words they will encounter at the start of each unit

   (D) Assigning students a partner who can tell them the definition of unknown words

10. Which of the following topics is most appropriate to cover when teaching students how to evaluate the accuracy of digital sources?

   (A) How to ensure the security of the sources

   (B) How to analyze the reliability of sources

   (C) How to examine the software used to create the sources

   (D) How to synthesize lists of potential sources

11. If atoms are the letters of the chemical language, then molecules are the words. But in order to put the chemical letters together to form chemical words, we have to know something about the rules of chemical spelling.

In the passage above, a discussion of atoms is introduced by

   (A) an analogy

   (B) an aphorism

   (C) an example

   (D) a hypothesis

12. Which THREE of the following techniques best facilitate productive, collaborative discussions in the classroom?

   (A) Arranging the chairs so that students all face the front of the room

   (B) Asking the students questions that have no clear wrong answer

   (C) Setting clear student expectations in advance, either verbally or in a rubric

   (D) Selecting a topic that is just above the age level of the students in the class

   (E) Allowing students plenty of time to think before responding to questions

13. Though Josh mentioned that she was a good friend, Anna knew it was a hollow compliment.

In the sentence above, the word "hollow" is best defined as

   (A) deep

   (B) sunken

   (C) vicious

   (D) insincere

14. The paragraph below is a draft written by a student.

> Samantha is a great basketball player. She sometimes scores as many as twenty points a game, and she helps our team win again and again. Samantha is also a great friend. She is really great and always shares her snacks with other kids on the team.

Which of the following resource books would best help the student author to develop a more effective description of Samantha within her draft?

   (A) An encyclopedia

   (B) A thesaurus

   (C) A grammar guide

   (D) A dictionary

Questions 15-17 refer to the following student draft.

A seventh-grade class is learning how to respond to literary analysis prompts. The following is a student response to the prompt "Describe the significance of the White Rabbit in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, by Lewis Carroll."

(1) The White Rabbit represents an adult who worries about schedules; he says, "Oh my ears and whiskers, how late it's getting!" (2) Alice wanders after the rabbit down the hole because, unknown to her, she wishes to not be a child anymore, she wants to be an adult. (3) When she follows the rabbit down the hole, she makes the choice to transform into an adult and leave her childish ways behind. (4) She begins her journey to Wonderland confused about all of her choices. (5) The author uses The White Rabbit as a metaphor to contrast with the childish ways Alice is leaving behind. (6) Her choices are like the choices she will have to make as she gets older.

15. Which of the following revisions will best improve the clarity of the response?

    (A) Switch sentence 1 and sentence 5

    (B) Switch sentence 2 and sentence 3

    (C) Switch sentence 4 and sentence 6

    (D) Switch sentence 5 and sentence 6

16. In sentence 1, which of the following words or phrases, inserted before "he says," provides the best transition between the first clause and the quotation?

    (A) similarly,

    (B) for instance,

    (C) first of all,

    (D) namely,

17. Which of the following errors is present in sentence 2?

    (A) Comma splice

    (B) Faulty parallelism

    (C) Incorrect subject-verb agreement

    (D) Inconsistent verb tense

All of us find or invent our language. We may come up with new sentences never heard before. We may use words in a unique way. But we are always finding our voice, locating old patterns or long-heard expressions, reaching into our thesaurus for the right term. And in inventing English, we are always inventing ourselves — finding our place among the welter of the words or in the swell of sounds that is the ocean of our tongue.

18. Which of the following most accurately describes how the author's use of point of view works as a rhetorical strategy?

    (A) He speaks in the first person to invite the readers to see how they participate in the activities he describes.

    (B) He speaks in the first person to emphasize his unique experience with the subject under discussion.

    (C) He speaks in the third person to highlight the universality of the topic being discussed.

    (D) He speaks in the third person to construct a more authoritative position from which to argue his point.

19. Everyone in my school has that video game. It is obviously the best video game out there. I need it too, or everyone will think I am backward.

    The argument above is ineffective because it suffers from which of the following logical fallacies?

    (A) Straw man

    (B) Ad hominem

    (C) Bandwagon

    (D) Post hoc

20. A teacher is working with an eighth-grade student who reads at the fifth-grade level. When the student encounters an unknown word, "cohabit," the teacher breaks the word into parts and has the student determine the meaning of "co" and the meaning of "habit," using words with the same prefix or root, such as "coworker" and "habitat."

    The activity described above relies most directly on knowledge of which of the following language concepts?

    (A) Morphemes

    (B) Synonyms

    (C) Phonemes

    (D) Orthography

21. An article describes a method of writing instruction in which "children are in different stages of the writing process, working on self-selected topics. Simultaneously, teachers are meeting with individual or small groups of students to confer and help move them along with their writing. Other components include peer conferences and/or response groups."

    The article best describes which of the following teaching models?

    (A) Writing workshop

    (B) Direct instruction

    (C) Literature circles

    (D) Shared writing

22. A teacher asks students to predict the outcome of a story. After students consider their predictions silently for one minute, they tell them to a partner. Then some students volunteer to describe their predictions to the class.

    During the activity, the students are using which of the following instructional strategies?

    (A) Anticipation guide

    (B) Reciprocal teaching

    (C) Shared reading

    (D) Think-pair-share

Questions 23-24 refer to the following passage.

As the strands of online discussion develop, the teacher can stimulate classroom discussion based on the responses expressed in the Web-based communication tool outside of class. Students will connect with this form of communication in a much more positive way than they would with the traditional homework assignment that would ask them to research Rosa Parks and report back to the class.

> —Heidi Hayes Jacobs, from *Curriculum 21: Essential Education for a Changing World*

23. The passage best supports which of the following statements?

    (A) When researching a historical figure, students should reference both print and Web-based resources to capture the most comprehensive range of information possible.

    (B) Collaborative online communication tools, when paired with classroom discussions, can foster a greater interest in course material for students.

    (C) The quality of an online discussion is strongly linked to the content of the discussion as well as the objectives set forth by the teacher.

    (D) Current research shows that collaborative online communication tools are most effective when they replace traditional classroom discussions.

24. Which of the following online communication tools would best support the instructional goal described in the passage?

    (A) An RSS feed

    (B) A video conference

    (C) A blog

    (D) A podcast

25. The following is an article published in a school newspaper.

    The student council has had a banner year with both fund-raising and school-spirit events, raising more money this year than in the past three years combined. Spirit Week was a particular success. There was high participation in the Color Wars, our yearly tradition of each class dressing up in their class color for points. The pep rally was widely praised too, especially on social media; special thanks to our principal for encouraging attendance.

    Maria Santos, student council president, noted, "It was really the student body's participation that made these events successful. We're so glad that everyone joined in and made this year so wonderful."

    Which of the following best describes the purpose of the article?

    (A) To persuade

    (B) To entertain

    (C) To inform

    (D) To advertise

26. After John had drilled eight holes, he noticed that the edge of the wood was cracked.

    The sentence is an example of which of the following sentence types?

    (A) Simple

    (B) Compound

    (C) Complex

    (D) Compound-complex

27. This was the big night—the speech to Cong[ress] on our ec[onomic] plan. I've seen Presidents over the years enter the House chamber without ever thinking I would one day be doing it. The reception was more than I'd anticipated—most of it of course from one side of the aisle. Still it was a thrill and something I'll long remember.

    —Ronald Reagan, from *The Reagan Diaries*

    Which of the following is the best literal interpretation of the excerpt?

    (A) Reagan's entrance into the chamber was better received by Congress than he had anticipated.

    (B) Reagan would long remember this night because of the impact of the economic plan.

    (C) Reagan's speech to Congress was favored by those who often opposed him.

    (D) Reagan would often compare his actions to those of other presidents he admired.

28. To best encourage student engagement in the classroom, a teacher should select texts based on which of the following?

    (A) The instructional objectives

    (B) The culture of the local community

    (C) The instructional reading level of the class

    (D) Topics that are interesting for the students

Answers to Sample Selected-Response Questions

1. The correct answer is (C). The passage presents factual information and a brief description of the plot of *The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane. (A), (B), and (D) are incorrect because the passage does not discuss the plot of the novels *Silent Thunder*, *Soldier's Heart*, or *Shades of Gray*.

2. The correct answer is (B). The statements on which the question is based constitute a definition of a fable. (A), (C), and (D) are incorrect because while all of the choices are types of narratives, only a fable fits the full description.

3. The correct answers are haiku, limerick, limerick, limerick, and haiku. Haikus are composed of 17 syllables (5 in the first line, 7 in the second line, and 5 in the third line) and are often focused on nature. Limericks are composed of 5 lines that follow a strict rhyme scheme, and they often center on nonsensical ideas.

4. The correct answer is (D). An aside is a comment made by an actor that the other characters on stage are not supposed to hear. (C) is incorrect because in the excerpt provided, the stage directions that read "more or less to herself" indicate that the following comment, "I don't know where we lost it—but we have," is an aside. (A) is incorrect because there are no stage directions before "Well" so one can assume that it is spoken aloud. (B) is incorrect because there are stage directions before, but they do not indicate that Ruth is speaking to herself.

5. The correct answer is (C). In "Spellbound," the speaker references the "wild winds" that "coldly blow" and tree boughs "weighed with snow" as evidence of winter's force. At the beginning of the poem she is yielding to the storm, but she finds her strength at the end with the statement "I will not, cannot go." The speaker in "Approach of Winter" also describes acts of resistance to winter's powerful force. He refers to leaves that "refuse to let go" despite a wind capable of "bending all" of the trees and to carmine-colored salvias that continue to bring color and life to a garden that is otherwise "bare" because of the approach of winter. (A) is incorrect because although it may apply to "Approach of Winter," there is no reference to life or spring in "Spellbound." (B) is incorrect because although both poems have a dreary undertone, neither makes any reference to sudden death. (D) is incorrect because although it may apply to "Spellbound," there is no reference to night in "Approach of Winter."

6. The correct answer is (A). The speaker's change in tone is most evident in lines 4 and 12. The speaker begins by saying she "cannot, cannot go" (line 4), indicating that her actions are dictated by an outside force. She ends by saying she "will not, cannot go" (line 12). By saying she will not go, she is asserting ownership over her actions. (B) is incorrect; although the speaker's tone could be interpreted as somewhat passionate toward the end of the poem, she is not initially apathetic toward the spell or the storm. (C) is also incorrect. The speaker could be described as despondent because she realizes that the spell has bound her; however, the tone toward the end is not hopeful. (D) is incorrect. Though the speaker is troubled by being under the spell, she is not agitated by it, nor is she inappropriately comfortable with it at the end.

7. The correct answer is (A). The repeated rhyming quatrains are regular and predictable in form; however, the content of the poem—the spell and the storm—is neither predictable nor regular. This pairing of structure and irregularity serves to highlight the impact that the spell has on the speaker, as well as her desire to regain control of her environment. Blank verse is unrhymed iambic pentameter. (B) is incorrect because "Spellbound" is not written in iambic pentameter, and it does follow a rhyme. (C) is incorrect because the breaks between stanzas symbolize a change in spatial observation and serve to mark changes in the author's attitude toward the spell. However, these breaks do not indicate that the speaker is regretting any of her thoughts or actions. (D) is incorrect because a slight sense of anticipation exists in that the reader wants to know what happens to the speaker as a result of the spell; however, this sense is not created through the omission of internal punctuation. Rather, it is created through the poem's use of imagery.

8. The correct answers are (D) and (E). Personification involves giving human traits to nonliving objects. Line 5 states that the leaves "refuse to let go," personifying the leaves by making it seem as if they are making the choice not to let go. A simile is a figure of speech comparing two unlike things, usually using the words "like" or "as." In the poem, the phrases "driven like hail" and "like no leaf that ever was" are examples of similes. (A) is incorrect because an allusion is a reference to a person, event, or other work of art outside the poem or literary piece. "Approach of Winter" references the salvia plant's color, but since this is not a person, event, or work of art, it is not an allusion. (B) is incorrect because in poetry, repetition is the use of a word or phrase multiple times to create an effect. No words or phrases are used repeatedly for effect in this poem. (C) is also incorrect. because an oxymoron is the combination of two words that appear to contradict each other, such as "bittersweet" and "virtual reality." No words in the poem are paired in this manner.

9. The correct answer is (B). Engaging with literature allows students to have a context for new words and allows them to assimilate these words by examining the book, answering questions about the book, and talking to others who are also using the same words. Seeing the words used in context also helps the students to have a better understanding of the meanings of words, as well as to understand how and when they are used. (A) is incorrect because, although having students memorize words and their definitions each week is the method prescribed by many teachers, it has been proven to be ineffective because students often forget the words and definitions as soon as they have completed the assessment for which they had to study them. (C) is incorrect because trying to learn all the new words they will encounter can be overwhelming and intimidating. It is nearly impossible to know every word that will be encountered, spoken, or needed during a given unit of study. (D) is incorrect because, although this approach is beneficial to students who are learning conversational and social English, it is not practical nor helpful for ELLs to have a partner with them at all times, and there is also no guarantee the assigned partner will always provide the student with accurate information. Students need to develop independent comprehension strategies.

10. The correct answer is (B). By looking at the elements of reliability, the student can determine the accuracy of the source. (A) is incorrect because the security of the source may have no bearing on the appropriateness or the accuracy. Also, security is not typically covered when learning to evaluate sources. (C) is incorrect because understanding how sources were created will not help a student assess the quality of digital references for Internet research. (D) is incorrect because, although providing predetermined lists for Internet research will ensure that the quality of digital references is high, being given a list will not help students learn the skill of evaluation.

11. The correct answer is (A). By suggesting that atoms are like letters, the author of the passage has used an analogy; that is, the author has characterized one thing by reference to another thing that functions in a similar way. (B) is incorrect because an aphorism is a statement of truth revealed in a witty manner. (C) is incorrect because it is too vague to say that the discussion is introduced by an example. (D) is incorrect because a hypothesis is an educated guess about how things work.

12. The correct answers are (B), (C), and (E). (B) is correct because if the students do not fear being wrong, they will be more inclined to participate in the discussion. (C) is correct because having clear guidelines and expectations will not only help limit unwanted behavior but also give the students confidence in their contributions. (E) is correct because giving students time to get their thoughts together will help to encourage coherent, confident contributions from students that will raise the level of the discussion. (A) is incorrect because if students face the front of the classroom, they will aim their discussion at the teacher. Students should always face one another during a discussion so that they learn to actively listen and thoughtfully respond to each other. (D) is incorrect because in order to have a discussion that every student can participate in confidently, topics should always be age appropriate.

13. The correct answer is (D). The use of the word "though" in the clause "Though Josh mentioned that she was a good friend" indicates that the compliment was not sincere. (A) is incorrect because describing a compliment as "deep" could indicate that the compliment was heartfelt and therefore would not logically follow the first clause. (B) is incorrect because "sunken" describes a physical state, which is not relevant to the sentence. (C) is incorrect because "vicious" is not a synonym for "hollow."

14. The correct answer is (B). The student could use a thesaurus to locate synonyms for "great." Use of these synonyms would help to clarify the type of person that Samantha is by providing a more specific description of her. (A) is incorrect because an encyclopedia would contain information on only well-known people, so it would not provide any information about Samantha. (C) is incorrect because there are no grammatical errors in the description. (D) is incorrect because all of the words in the description are used correctly.

15. The correct answer is (D). Sentence 6 is most appropriate after sentence 4 because it clarifies why Alice is confused about the choices she must make in Wonderland. Sentence 5 is an appropriate conclusion because it ties back to the thesis stated in sentence 1. (A) is incorrect because sentence 1 is most appropriate as the opening of the paragraph; it introduces the main idea of the response. Also, the quotation contained within sentence 1 would not make sense if placed in sentence 5's current position. (B) is incorrect because these sentences contain similar information. Switching their placement would not contribute to overall clarity. (C) is incorrect because the fact that Alice is making choices in Wonderland must be introduced, as it is in sentence 4, before the nature of her choices can be discussed in more detail, as it is in sentence 6.

16. The correct answer is (B). "For instance" signals that the quotation illustrates the kind of worry described in the first clause. (A) is incorrect because it suggests that the quotation describes a similar but distinct behavior of the rabbit's. (C) is incorrect because it suggests that the quotation is the beginning of a sequence, but there are no additional items in the sequence. (D) is incorrect because "namely" is typically used to restate an idea in more specific terms, not to provide an illustration of it.

17. The correct answer is (A). The comma between "anymore" and "she wants" is a comma splice; it is used incorrectly to separate two independent clauses. (B) and (C) are incorrect because there are no examples of faulty parallelism or incorrect subject-verb agreement in sentence 2. (D) is incorrect because all of the verbs used in sentence 2 are in the present tense.

18. The correct answer is (A). In first person point of view, the author or narrator writes from his or her own perspective. In this passage, the author uses the words "we" and "our" to suggest that his experience is similar to the readers' experience, and invites readers to understand how people invent themselves through the words they use. (B) is incorrect because the author does not suggest that inventing language is unique to him as an author. (C) and (D) are incorrect because the third person point of view is not used in the passage.

19. The correct answer is (C). The bandwagon fallacy is the suggestion that one should join a cause or adopt a behavior because of its popularity, not because of any reasoned argument for it. (A) is incorrect because the straw man fallacy is committed when a person argues against a distorted, exaggerated, or misrepresented version of a position instead of arguing against the actual position. (B) is incorrect because the ad hominem fallacy involves rejecting an argument on the basis of some irrelevant fact about the person presenting it. (D) is incorrect because the post hoc fallacy is committed when it is concluded that one event causes another simply because the proposed cause occurred before the proposed effect.

20. The correct answer is (A). Knowledge of morphemes is knowledge of the affixes, combining forms, and roots of words. This knowledge builds vocabulary, and it is necessary for the kind of word analysis described in the activity. Knowledge of synonyms (B) is helpful in vocabulary development, but it is not directly relevant to the activity described. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds, or phonemes (C), in spoken words. While knowledge of phonemes might be considered a prerequisite for vocabulary development, it is not the focus of the activity

described. Orthographic knowledge (D) is the part of language study that deals with letters and spelling. It is not the focus of the activity described.

21. The correct answer is (A). In the writing workshop model, student writers progress at different rates, and their work is supported by the feedback they receive in both teacher conferences and peer response groups. (B) is incorrect because direct instruction is a general term for the explicit teaching of a skill set using lectures or demonstrations of the material, rather than exploratory models such as inquiry-based learning. (C) is incorrect because literature circles consist of small groups of students who gather together to discuss a piece of literature in depth. The discussion is guided by students' responses to what they have read. (D) is incorrect because during shared writing the teacher and students compose text together, with both contributing their thoughts and ideas to the process, while the teacher acts as scribe, writing the text as it is composed.

22. The correct answer is (D). Think-pair-share is a strategy that supports the development of listening and speaking skills—and, in this case, reading skills. The class is given a prompt or a question, and every student thinks of a response and discusses it with a partner. After partner discussion, some students may also share their responses with the class. (A) is incorrect because an anticipation guide is used before reading to activate students' prior knowledge and build curiosity about a new topic. (B) is incorrect because reciprocal teaching allows students to take turns acting as teachers in small-group reading sessions using four strategies: summarizing, question generating, clarifying, and predicting. (C) is incorrect because shared reading is an interactive reading experience commonly used at the elementary level, in which the teacher models the strategies of proficient readers and asks students questions, usually while reading an enlarged text that all students can see.

23. The correct answer is (B). The passage emphasizes that online discussions should be used as a starting point for deeper classroom discussion, and that students are more receptive to online discussions than they are to independent research findings that they "report back to the class." It can be inferred from these statements that the social nature of online discussions yields greater interest in course material. (A) and (C) are incorrect because although they may be true statements, they are not supported by the passage. (D) is also incorrect because the passage states that collaborative online communication tools are most effective when they are paired with classroom discussions, not when they replace classroom discussions.

24. The correct answer is (C). A blog is an online discussion tool that allows users to read and respond to posts made by any user with posting privileges. It is ideal for this instructional goal because users can access the content both at home to complete their homework assignments and in class to facilitate discussion. None of the other tools would be as effective at supporting the instructional goal. (A) is incorrect because an RSS feed,, otherwise known as Really Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary, is a tool for disseminating information from multiple websites to subscribers. While an RSS feed may be useful for reading posts, it is traditionally one-sided and therefore not ideal for dynamic online discussions. (B) is incorrect because video conferencing is an online discussion tool that allows two or more users to connect via Web cam. While video conferencing is an effective online communication tool and may be appropriate for some activities, content is not automatically saved or easily retrievable, and conferences must be done in real time. (D) is incorrect because podcasting is a type of digital media that combines audio, video, text, and/or images to create a downloadable file. Though podcasts can spark dialogue between the producer and the consumer of the media, but they are not the ideal tool for an online discussion because they do not allow for dynamic interactions.

25. The correct answer is (C). The writer presents facts about the student council's progress and a quotation from the student council president in order to inform the reader about Spirit Week events. (A) is incorrect because while the article notes the student council's achievements, it does so only to inform the reader of these achievements. The language is straightforward and explanatory, and not persuasive. (B) is incorrect because while the article describes many entertaining events, it seeks to inform rather than entertain. (D) is incorrect because although the piece provides positive press for the student council, it seeks to inform the reader about the work they have done rather than advertise their achievements.

26. The correct answer is (C). Complex sentences contain one or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses. "After John had drilled eight holes" is a dependent clause, and "he noticed that the edge of the wood was cracked" is an independent clause. (A) is incorrect because a simple sentence contains only one independent clause and no dependent clauses. (B) is incorrect because a compound sentence contains two or more independent clause, and the example contains only one. (D) is incorrect because a compound-complex sentence contains two or more independent clauses as well as one or more dependent clauses. The example contains one independent clause and one dependent clause.

27. The correct answer is (A). In the excerpt, Reagan says that he received a better reception to his speech than he had anticipated. (B) is incorrect because in the excerpt Reagan is speaking about the impact of the speech itself, not the content. (C) is incorrect because Reagan states that most of the speech's supporters were from his own political party (Republican, in this case). (D) is incorrect because while Reagan mentions that he had seen other Presidents enter the House chamber, he draws no comparisons between them and himself.

28. The correct answer is (D). Learners should be at the center of instruction, and they are more likely to be engaged if they are reading about topics in which they are interested.. (A) is incorrect because while curriculum objectives are important, they should not overshadow student learning and needs. (B) is incorrect because the focus should be based on the needs of the classroom community, not the community outside the classroom. (C) is incorrect because although selecting texts that are on or below level may make reading easier, it does not ensure engagement or comprehension.

Constructed-Response Questions

This section presents the standards and scoring guide used in scoring the essays. Sample questions, responses, and commentary on the responses can be found on page 34.

Readers will assign scores based on the following scoring guide.

Scoring Guide

Score of 3

The response is successful in the following ways:

- It demonstrates an ability to analyze the stimulus material thoughtfully and in depth.
- It demonstrates a strong knowledge of the subject matter relevant to the question.
- It responds appropriately to all parts of the question.
- It demonstrates facility with the conventions of standard written English.

Score of 2

The response demonstrates some understanding of the topic, but it is limited in one or more of the following ways:

- It may indicate a misreading of the stimulus material or provide superficial analysis.
- It may demonstrate only superficial knowledge of the subject matter relevant to the question.
- It may respond to one or more parts of the question inadequately or not at all.
- It may contain significant writing errors.

Score of 1

The response is seriously flawed in one or more of the following ways:

- It may demonstrate weak understanding of the subject matter or of the writing task.
- It may fail to respond adequately to most parts of the question.
- It may be incoherent or severely underdeveloped.
- It may contain severe and persistent writing errors.

Score of 0

The response is blank, off-topic, or totally incorrect, or it merely rephrases the question.

4. Determine Your Strategy for Success

Set clear goals and deadlines so your test preparation is focused and efficient

Effective *Praxis* test preparation doesn't just happen. You'll want to set clear goals and deadlines for yourself along the way. Otherwise, you may not feel ready and confident on test day.

1) Learn what the test covers.

You may have heard that there are several different versions of the same test. It's true. You may take one version of the test and your friend may take a different version a few months later. Each test has different questions covering the same subject area, but both versions of the test measure the same skills and content knowledge.

You'll find specific information on the test you're taking on page 5, which outlines the content categories that the test measures and what percentage of the test covers each topic. Visit www.ets.org/praxis/testprep for information on other *Praxis* tests.

2) Assess how well you know the content.

Research shows that test takers tend to overestimate their preparedness—this is why some test takers assume they did well and then find out they did not pass.

The *Praxis* tests are demanding enough to require serious review of likely content, and the longer you've been away from the content, the more preparation you will most likely need. If it has been longer than a few months since you've studied your content area, make a concerted effort to prepare.

3) Collect study materials.

Gathering and organizing your materials for review are critical steps in preparing for the *Praxis* tests. Consider the following reference sources as you plan your study:

- Did you take a course in which the content area was covered? If yes, do you still have your books or your notes?
- Does your local library have a high school-level textbook in this area? Does your college library have a good introductory college-level textbook in this area?

Practice materials are available for purchase for many *Praxis* tests at www.ets.org/praxis/testprep. Test preparation materials include sample questions and answers with explanations.

4) Plan and organize your time.

You can begin to plan and organize your time while you are still collecting materials. Allow yourself plenty of review time to avoid cramming new material at the end. Here are a few tips:

- Choose a test date far enough in the future to leave you plenty of preparation time. Test dates can be found at www.ets.org/praxis/register/centers_dates.
- Work backward from that date to figure out how much time you will need for review.
- Set a realistic schedule—and stick to it.

5) Practice explaining the key concepts.

Praxis tests with constructed-response questions assess your ability to explain material effectively. As a teacher, you'll need to be able to explain concepts and processes to students in a clear, understandable way. What are the major concepts you will be required to teach? Can you explain them in your own words accurately, completely, and clearly? Practice explaining these concepts to test your ability to effectively explain what you know.

6) Understand how questions will be scored.

Scoring information can be found on page 55.

7) Develop a study plan.

A study plan provides a road map to prepare for the *Praxis* tests. It can help you understand what skills and knowledge are covered on the test and where to focus your attention. Use the study plan template on page 32 to organize your efforts.

And most important—get started!

Would a Study Group Work for You?

Using this guide as part of a study group

People who have a lot of studying to do sometimes find it helpful to form a study group with others who are working toward the same goal. Study groups give members opportunities to ask questions and get detailed answers. In a group, some members usually have a better understanding of certain topics, while others in the group may be better at other topics. As members take turns explaining concepts to one another, everyone builds self-confidence.

If the group encounters a question that none of the members can answer well, the group can go to a teacher or other expert and get answers efficiently. Because study groups schedule regular meetings, members study in a more disciplined fashion. They also gain emotional support. The group should be large enough so that multiple people can contribute different kinds of knowledge, but small enough so that it stays focused. Often, three to six members is a good size.

Here are some ways to use this guide as part of a study group:

- **Plan the group's study program.** Parts of the study plan template, beginning on page 32, can help to structure your group's study program. By filling out the first five columns and sharing the worksheets, everyone will learn more about your group's mix of abilities and about the resources, such as textbooks, that members can share with the group. In the sixth column ("Dates I will study the content"), you can create an overall schedule for your group's study program.

- **Plan individual group sessions.** At the end of each session, the group should decide what specific topics will be covered at the next meeting and who will present each topic. Use the topic headings and subheadings in the Test at a Glance table on page 5 to select topics, and then select practice questions, beginning on page 15.

- **Prepare your presentation for the group.** When it's your turn to present, prepare something that is more than a lecture. Write two or three original questions to pose to the group. Practicing writing actual questions can help you better understand the topics covered on the test as well as the types of questions you will encounter on the test. It will also give other members of the group extra practice at answering questions.

- **Take a practice test together.** The idea of a practice test is to simulate an actual administration of the test, so scheduling a test session with the group will add to the realism and may also help boost everyone's confidence. Remember, complete the practice test using only the time that will be allotted for that test on your administration day.

- **Learn from the results of the practice test.** Review the results of the practice test, including the number of questions answered correctly in each content category. For tests that contain constructed-response questions, look at the Sample Test Questions section, which also contain sample responses to those questions and shows how they were scored. Then try to follow the same guidelines that the test scorers use.

- **Be as critical as you can.** You're not doing your study partner(s) any favors by letting them get away with an answer that does not cover all parts of the question adequately.

- **Be specific.** Write comments that are as detailed as the comments about the sample responses. Indicate where and how your study partner(s) are doing an inadequate job of answering the question. Writing notes in the margins of the answer sheet may also help.

- **Be supportive.** Include comments that point out what your study partner(s) got right.

Then plan one or more study sessions based on aspects of the questions on which group members performed poorly. For example, each group member might be responsible for rewriting one paragraph of a response in which someone else did an inadequate job.

Whether you decide to study alone or with a group, remember that the best way to prepare is to have an organized plan. The plan should set goals based on specific topics and skills that you need to learn, and it should commit you to a realistic set of deadlines for meeting those goals. Then you need to discipline yourself to stick with your plan and accomplish your goals on schedule.

5. Develop Your Study Plan

Develop a personalized study plan and schedule

Planning your study time is important because it will help ensure that you review all content areas covered on the test. Use the sample study plan below as a guide. It shows a plan for the *Core Academic Skills for Educators: Reading* test. Following that is a study plan template that you can fill out to create your own plan. Use the "Learn about Your Test" and "Test Specifications" information beginning on page 5 to help complete it.

Use this worksheet to:
1. **Define Content Areas:** List the most important content areas for your test as defined in chapter 1.
2. **Determine Strengths and Weaknesses:** Identify your strengths and weaknesses in each content area.
3. **Identify Resources:** Identify the books, courses, and other resources you plan to use for each content area.
4. **Study:** Create and commit to a schedule that provides for regular study periods.

Praxis Test Name (Test Code):   Core Academic Skills for Educators: Reading (5712)
Test Date: 9/15/15

Content covered	Description of content	How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)	What resources do I have/need for the content?	Where can I find the resources I need?	Dates I will study the content	Date completed
Key Ideas and Details						
Close reading	Draw inferences and implications from the directly stated content of a reading selection	3	Middle school English textbook	College library, middle school teacher	7/15/15	7/15/15
Determining Ideas	Identify summaries or paraphrases of the main idea or primary purpose of a reading selection	3	Middle school English textbook	College library, middle school teacher	7/17/15	7/17/15
Determining Ideas	Identify summaries or paraphrases of the supporting ideas and specific details in a reading selection	3	Middle and high school English textbook	College library, middle and high school teachers	7/20/15	7/21/15
Craft, Structure, and Language Skills						
Interpreting tone	Determine the author's attitude toward material discussed in a reading selection	4	Middle and high school English textbook	College library, middle and high school teachers	7/25/15	7/26/15
Analysis of structure	Identify key transition words and phrases in a reading selection and how they are used	3	Middle and high school English textbook, dictionary	College library, middle and high school teachers	7/25/15	7/27/15
Analysis of structure	Identify how a reading selection is organized in terms of cause/effect, compare/contrast, problem/solution, etc.	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/15	8/1/15
Author's purpose	Determine the role that an idea, reference, or piece of information plays in an author's discussion or argument	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/15	8/1/15

Content covered	Description of content	How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)	What resources do I have/need for the content?	Where can I find the resources I need?	Dates I will study the content	Date completed
Language in different contexts	Determine whether information presented in a reading selection is presented as fact or opinion	4	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/15	8/1/15
Contextual meaning	Identify the meanings of words as they are used in the context of a reading selection	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/15	8/1/15
Figurative Language	Understand figurative language and nuances in word meanings	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/8/15	8/8/15
Vocabulary range	Understand a range of words and phrases sufficient for reading at the college and career readiness level	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/15/15	8/17/15
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas						
Diverse media and formats	Analyze content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/22/15	8/24/15
Evaluation of arguments	Identify the relationship among ideas presented in a reading selection	4	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/24/15	8/24/15
Evaluation of arguments	Determine whether evidence strengthens, weakens, or is relevant to the arguments in a reading selection	3	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/27/15	8/27/15
Evaluation of arguments	Determine the logical assumptions upon which an argument or conclusion is based	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/28/15	8/30/15
Evaluation of arguments	Draw conclusions from material presented in a reading selection	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/30/15	8/31/15
Comparison of texts	Recognize or predict ideas or situations that are extensions of or similar to what has been presented in a reading selection	4	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	9/3/15	9/4/15
Comparison of texts	Apply ideas presented in a reading selection to other situations	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	9/5/15	9/6/15

My Study Plan

Use this worksheet to:

1. **Define Content Areas:** List the most important content areas for your test as defined in chapter 1.
2. **Determine Strengths and Weaknesses:** Identify your strengths and weaknesses in each content area.
3. **Identify Resources:** Identify the books, courses, and other resources you plan to use for each content area.
4. **Study:** Create and commit to a schedule that provides for regular study periods.

Praxis Test Name (Test Code): _____

Test Date: _____

Content covered	Description of content	How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)	What resources do I have/need for this content?	Where can I find the resources I need?	Dates I will study this content	Date completed

Content covered	Description of content	How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)	What resources do I have/need for the content?	Where can I find the resources I need?	Dates I will study the content	Date completed

6. Review Study Topics

Review study topics with questions for discussion

Using the Study Topics

The Middle School English Language Arts test is designed to measure the knowledge and competencies necessary for a beginning teacher in the school environment.

This chapter is intended to help you organize your preparation for the test and to give you a clear indication about the depth and breadth of the knowledge required for success on the test.

You are not expected to be an expert on all aspects of the topics that follow. Virtually all accredited programs address the content categories, topics, subtopics, and study topics. You are likely to find that the topics below are covered by most introductory textbooks. Consult materials and resources, including lecture and laboratory notes, from all your coursework. You should be able to match up specific topics and subtopics with what you have covered in your courses.

Try not to be overwhelmed by the volume and scope of content knowledge in this guide. An overview such as this that just lists topics does not offer a great deal of context. Although a specific term may not seem familiar as you see it here, you might find you can understand it when applied to a real-life situation. Many of the items on the actual test will provide you with a context to apply to these topics or terms.

Discussion Areas

Interspersed throughout the study topics are discussion areas, presented as open-ended questions or statements. These discussion areas are intended to help test your knowledge of fundamental concepts and your ability to apply those concepts to situations in the classroom or the real world. Most of the areas require you to combine several pieces of knowledge to formulate an integrated understanding and response. If you spend time on these areas, you will gain increased understanding and facility with the subject matter covered on the test. You may want to discuss these areas and your answers with a teacher or mentor.

Note that this study companion *does **not** provide answers for the discussion area questions*, but thinking about the answers to them will help improve your understanding of fundamental concepts and will probably help you answer a broad range of questions on the test.

Study Topics

An overview of the areas covered on the test, along with their subareas, follows.

I. Reading

This section of the test focuses on knowledge of concepts relevant to the study of literature and informational texts. Some specific factual knowledge is required, but for most questions, no previous experience with the supplied passages is required. However, you should be familiar with major works and authors of literature appropriate for adolescents and be able to locate and interpret such works within historical and literary contexts. In addition, you will need to draw upon your knowledge of literary elements, figurative language, and literary forms as you interpret, paraphrase, analyze, and compare various types of texts. The reading section is divided into three subsections: (a) general knowledge, (b) literature, and (c) informational texts and rhetoric.

A. Reading Literature

1. Knows the major works, authors, and contexts of United States, British, and World literature appropriate for adolescents

    a. identifies the authors and titles of major works of fiction, poetry, drama, and literary nonfiction appropriate for adolescents

    b. identifies the historical or literary context of major works of fiction, poetry, drama, and literary nonfiction appropriate for adolescents

    The following authors are *representative* of those you may be asked to identify:

    – Louisa May Alcott
    – Maya Angelou
    – Ray Bradbury
    – Sandra Cisneros
    – Stephen Crane
    – Daniel Defoe
    – Emily Dickinson
    – Frederick Douglass
    – Ralph Waldo Emerson
    – F. Scott Fitzgerald
    – Anne Frank
    – Robert Frost
    – S.E. Hinton
    – Zora Neale Hurston
    – John Keats
    – Helen Keller
    – Harper Lee
    – Madeleine L'Engle

– C. S. Lewis
– Jack London
– Lois Lowry
– Herman Melville
– George Orwell
– Edgar Allan Poe
– J. D. Salinger
– William Shakespeare
– Mary Shelley
– Percy Bysshe Shelley
– Gary Soto
– Amy Tan
– J.R.R. Tolkien
– Mark Twain
– Alice Walker
– H.G. Wells
– Walt Whitman

Discussion areas

Questions about literary context may ask you to identify a representative work from a particular school of writers. The schools covered on the test include, but are not limited to:

• Harlem Renaissance (Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen)
• British Romantics (John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord Byron)
• Metaphysical poets (John Donne, Andrew Marvell, George Herbert)
• Transcendentalism (Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau)

Some questions will ask you to place a work in a particular literary or historical period. The periods covered on the test include, but are not limited to:

• Old English period
• Middle English period
• British Renaissance
• British Neoclassical period
• British Romantic period
• American Colonial period
• American Renaissance
• British Victorian period
• American naturalistic period
• British and/or American modernist period
• British and/or American postmodernist period

What novels, poems, and essays from the American naturalistic period might you teach in a middle school English language arts class?

2. Understands the defining characteristics of literary genres (e.g., poetry, literary nonfiction, drama)

   a. identifies typical characteristics of a genre

   b. applies correct terminology for a genre (e.g., stanza versus paragraph)

   c. compares and contrasts different genres

Discussion areas

The test focuses on the four main genres identified by the CCSS:

- Stories
- Dramas
- Poetry
- Literary Nonfiction

3. Knows the defining characteristics of major subgenres (e.g., sonnet, historical fiction, functional text)

   a. identifies characteristics of subgenres through distinctions in form or content (e.g., sonnets versus ballads, satire versus realism)

   b. differentiates between two subgenres (e.g., historical fiction and science fiction)

Discussion areas

Subgenre forms include, but are not limited to:

- Biography
- Drama
- Epic poem
- Essay
- History
- Lyric
- Novel
- Prose poem

Subgenres may also vary by content:

- Bildungsroman/coming of age story
- Comedy
- Gothic
- Pastoral
- Romance
- Satire
- Tragedy

B. Literature

1. Understands how literal and inferential interpretations of a literary text can be supported with textual evidence

   a. comprehends the literal meaning of a text

   b. draws inferences from a text

   c. determines the textual evidence that supports an analysis of what a text says or implies

2. Understands how a theme is developed within and across works from a wide variety of literary genres and other media

   a. identifies the theme of a given text

   b. analyzes how a theme is developed throughout one or more works

   c. recognizes universal themes from myths, traditional stories, or religious works and how they are rendered or alluded to in contemporary works

3. Understands how literary elements (e.g., characterization, setting, plot development) contribute to the meaning of a text

   a. analyzes the impact of differences in the points of view of characters and readers

   b. analyzes the structure of a plot

   c. analyzes how setting contributes to mood, tone, and conflict

   d. analyzes how particular lines of dialogue or story events impact meaning

   e. analyzes the text for the use of indirect and direct characterization

4. Understands how word choice (e.g., figurative, connotative, or informal language) contributes to the meaning and tone of a literary text

   a. distinguishes between connotation and denotation in a text

   b. identifies examples of various types of figurative language (e.g., extended metaphor, imagery, hyperbole)

   c. distinguishes between what is directly stated in a text and what is meant (e.g., satire, irony, understatement)

   d. determines the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meaning

   e. analyzes the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone

5. Understands how poetic devices and structure contribute to the meaning of a poem

   a. analyzes how poetic devices (e.g. rhyme scheme, rhythm, figurative language) contribute to the meaning of a poem

   b. analyzes how the structure of a poem contributes to its meaning

6. Understands literacy skills to support active reading of a literary text (e.g., making predictions, making connections with the text, summarizing)

   a. identifies literacy skills to support active reading (e.g., text-to-self connection, prediction, summarizing)

   b. evaluates a summary of a passage

   c. evaluates the strength of a prediction based on textual evidence

C. Informational Texts and Rhetoric

1. Understands how literal and inferential interpretations of an informational text can be supported with textual evidence

   a. comprehends the literal meaning of a text

   b. draws inferences from a text

   c. determines the textual evidence that supports an analysis of what a text says or implies

   d. compares two or more texts that provide conflicting facts or perspectives on the same topic

2. Knows a variety of organizational patterns that can be used to develop a central idea in an informational text

   a. identifies the central idea of a text

   b. analyzes how an author develops or refines a central idea in a text

   c. identifies the organizational pattern of a text (e.g., problem-solution, cause-effect, chronological order)

   d. analyzes how ideas are connected to and distinguished from one another in a text

Discussion areas

- How is organization linked to an essay's purpose? For example, how could a cause-and-effect organizational pattern be effective in a persuasive essay?

3. Understands how word choice (e.g., figurative, connotative, or technical language) contributes to the meaning and tone of an informational text

   a. distinguishes between connotation and denotation in a text

   b. identifies the purpose of technical language in a text

   c. distinguishes between what is directly stated in an informational text and what is meant (e.g., satire, irony, understatement)

4. Understands methods that authors use to convey purpose and perspective in informational texts

   a. determines an author's point of view or purpose

   b. analyzes how an author uses rhetoric to support the point of view or purpose of a text

Discussion areas

- Select essays from books or journals and identify the author's purpose. Think about the methods the author uses to achieve the purpose.

II.   Language Use and Vocabulary

This section of the test focuses on knowledge of concepts relevant to reading comprehension at the level of the word and sentence. Some specific factual knowledge is required, particularly the terms for the elements of grammar such as the parts of speech, syntax, and sentence types. In addition, you will need to draw upon your skills at determining word meaning through the use of affixes, syntax, and context clues. You must also have an understanding of the appropriate reference materials for supporting particular language usage tasks and a familiarity with the English dialect and diction associated with particular regions, cultural groups, and time periods.

1. Understands the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, syntax, and mechanics (e.g., sentence types, verb tenses, punctuation)

    a.   explains the function of different parts of speech

    b.   identifies errors in standard English grammar, usage, syntax, and mechanics (e.g., inconsistent verb tense, nonparallel structure)

    c.   justifies grammar, usage, syntax, and mechanics choices (e.g., colon versus semicolon, its versus it's, saw versus seen)

    d.   identifies examples of different sentence types (e.g., simple, compound, compound-complex)

    Discussion areas

    • What are the most common errors that middle school students make in grammar and sentence structure?

2. Understands the use of affixes, context, and syntax to determine word meaning

    a.   applies knowledge of affixes to determine word meaning

    b.   uses context clues to determine word meaning

    c.   applies knowledge of syntax to determine word meaning

    Discussion areas

    • How is meaning affected by punctuation or word order in a sentence?

3. Understands the use of print and digital reference materials to support correct language usage

    a.   determines the most appropriate print or digital reference material for a particular language usage task

4. Is familiar with variation in dialect and diction across regions, cultural groups, and time periods

    a.   identifies variation in dialect and diction across regions, cultural groups, and time periods

III.   Writing, Speaking, and Listening

These questions focus on knowledge of effective writing and speaking practices for multiple purposes and audiences. You will need some factual knowledge about common types of writing, common methods of appeal and persuasion, and effective and ethical research practices. You will also need to draw upon your ability to evaluate the clarity and coherence of writing and the strength of an argument. Many of the questions in this section will be based on examples of student writing or speech in need of revision.

1. Understands the distinct characteristics of various types of writing (e.g., argumentative, informative/explanatory, narrative)

    a.   distinguishes among common types of writing

    b.   identifies examples of common types of writing

    c.   identifies typical characteristics of a type of writing

    Discussion areas

    • What are some techniques commonly used in argumentative writing but not in informative/explanatory writing?

2. Understands that effective writing is appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience

    a.   identifies the task, purpose, or intended audience for a piece of writing

    b.   chooses the most appropriate type of writing for a particular task, purpose, or audience

    c.   evaluates the effectiveness of a particular piece of writing for a specific task, purpose, or audience

Discussion areas

- How does the purpose or intended audience for a piece of writing shape its form? Its tone?

3. Understands the characteristics of clear and coherent writing (e.g., development, organization, style)

   a. identifies details that help to develop a main idea

   b. organizes parts of a text clearly and coherently

   c. chooses appropriate transitions

   d. justifies stylistic choices within a clear and coherent piece of writing

4. Knows effective research practices, including evaluating the credibility of multiple print and digital sources, gathering relevant information, and citing sources accurately

   a. identifies relevant information during research on a given topic

   b. evaluates the credibility of a print or digital source

   c. identifies effective research practices

   d. interprets a citation of a print or digital source

   e. applies appropriate documentation techniques when quoting or paraphrasing source material to avoid plagiarism

5. Understands the effective delivery of a speech or presentation (e.g., eye contact, visual aids, tone)

   a. identifies characteristics of effective delivery of a speech or presentation

   b. evaluates the integration of multimedia components or visual displays in a particular presentation

   c. evaluates the advantages and disadvantages of using different media to present ideas

6. Understands methods that authors use to appeal to a specific audience

   a. identifies methods of appeal or persuasion (e.g., expert opinion, generalization, testimonial)

   b. evaluates the effectiveness of an author's methods of appeal

7. Understands what constitutes an effective written argument with strong supporting evidence

   a. evaluates the argument and specific claims in an expository or persuasive text

   b. assesses whether an author's reasoning is sound

   c. assesses whether evidence is relevant, factual, and sufficient

Discussion areas

- How do stereotypes and biases interfere with the effectiveness of an author's argument?

IV. English Language Arts Instruction

This section of the test focuses on knowledge of effective instructional practices for middle school English language arts. You will need factual knowledge of commonly used research- based strategies for language acquisition and vocabulary development, reading, and writing, and of assessment and differentiated instruction in the English language arts classroom. You should also be prepared to interpret short research passages on these topics and apply recommendations from the passages to particular instructional challenges. Finally, you will need to draw on your knowledge of techniques for supporting effective student discussions and use of communication technology and for incorporating student interests and input into texts choice, curriculum, and assessment.

1. Knows commonly used research-based approaches to supporting language acquisition and vocabulary development for diverse learners

   a. recognizes approaches to supporting language acquisition or vocabulary development

   b. evaluates the effectiveness of specific approaches to supporting language acquisition or vocabulary development

   c. interprets research and applies it to particular instructional challenges related to language acquisition or vocabulary development

Discussion areas

- What are the phases of language development, especially for middle school students learning English?

2. Knows techniques for instructing students to participate productively in collaborative discussions (e.g., one-on-one, in groups, teacher-led) and listen actively

   a. identifies a variety of techniques for instructing students to participate productively in collaborative discussions and listen actively (e.g., selecting age-appropriate topics, facilitating appropriate discussion behavior, ensuring accountability)

   b. evaluates the effectiveness of specific techniques for achieving particular discussion goals

3. Knows techniques for instructing students to communicate effectively and appropriately using technological tools (e.g., presentation software, blogs, wikis)

   a. identifies a variety of techniques for instructing students to communicate effectively and appropriately using technological tools

   b. evaluates the effectiveness of specific technology-based techniques for achieving particular communication goals

4. Knows commonly used research-based approaches to grouping and differentiated instruction to meet specific instructional objectives in English Language Arts (e.g., literature circles, peer conferencing, collaborating with educators of exceptional/special needs or linguistically diverse children)

   a. identifies approaches to grouping or differentiated instruction to meet specific instructional objectives in English language arts

   b. evaluates the effectiveness of specific grouping or differentiation approaches for achieving particular instructional goals

5. Is familiar with approaches to choosing texts for students based on ability and interests

   a. identifies approaches to choosing texts for students based on ability and interests

6. Understands commonly used research-based strategies for teaching adolescent reading (e.g., activating prior knowledge, modeling metacognitive practices)

   a. recognizes commonly used research-based strategies for teaching adolescent reading

   b. evaluates the effectiveness of specific strategies to support a particular reading task

   c. interprets research and applies it to particular reading instruction challenges

Discussion areas

Some questions will test your ability to recognize specific strategies for teaching reading. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Anticipation guides
- Cueing systems
- Double-entry journals
- Metacognition
- Phonics instruction
- Questioning the author
- Reciprocal teaching
- Semantic feature analysis

What specific classroom activities can you imagine for teaching Gwendolyn Brooks's poem "We Real Cool" to a heterogeneous class of seventh graders? And for teaching Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" to the same class?

7. Understands commonly used research-based approaches to teaching components of writing (e.g., writing workshop, modeling)

   a. recognizes commonly used research-based approaches to teaching components of writing

   b. evaluates the effectiveness of specific strategies to support a particular writing task

   c. interprets research and applies it to particular writing instruction challenges

Discussion areas

Some questions will test your ability to recognize specific strategies for teaching reading. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Collaborative writing
- Process writing
- Sentence combining
- RAFT
- Writing workshop

8. Knows approaches to and purposes of formative and summative assessment of reading, writing, speaking, and listening (e.g., use of rubrics, conferencing techniques, providing useful feedback)

   a. recognizes a variety of approaches to and purposes of formative and summative assessment of reading, writing, speaking, and listening

   b. evaluates the effectiveness of a variety of approaches to formative and summative assessment of reading, writing, speaking, and listening

   c. interprets research and applies it to particular assessment challenges

Discussion areas

Some questions will require you to demonstrate your knowledge of various assessment tools and response strategies. These may include, but are not limited to:

- 3-2-1 prompts
- Exit tickets
- Holistic scoring
- Peer review
- Portfolios
- Scoring rubrics
- Self-assessment

How can you assess students' writing in order to determine the classroom activities and writing assignments that will help them improve?

9. Knows effective approaches to incorporating student input into the design and use of English Language Arts curriculum and assessments (e.g., literature selection, collaboratively designed rubrics)

   a. identifies approaches to gathering student input, feedback, and reflection that motivate students and support the development of an effective learning environment

   b. identifies approaches to helping students become monitors of their own work and growth in speaking, listening, writing, reading, enacting, and viewing

Constructed-Response Questions

This section of the chapter provides you with strategies for reading, analyzing, and understanding the constructed-response questions on the Middle School English Language Arts test and for writing successful responses.

The test contains two equally weighted constructed-response questions that constitute approximately 25 percent of the test taker's total test score and emphasize the use of critical-thinking skills. You should plan to spend about 15 minutes on each short essay question, for a total of 30 minutes on this portion of the test. Because the constructed-response section is timed separately, you will have no more than 30 minutes to write both essays.

This test contains two different types of questions.

The first type of question assesses your understanding of how the formal literary devices used in a poem or prose excerpt contribute to the development of meaning in the text. The question will ask you to analyze a piece of literature or literary nonfiction.

The second type of question assesses your understanding of how to teach reading or writing at the middle school level. The question will ask you to analyze a piece of student work or a classroom situation to determine students' strengths and/or weaknesses and to describe an instructional activity that addresses the identified strengths and/or weaknesses.

In the sections that follow, you will find a detailed description of these question types.

What to Study

Success on this test is not simply a matter of learning more about the structure of constructed-response questions. Cogent organization is important, but success on the test also requires real knowledge of the field. The test evaluates your ability to convey an understanding of some of the significant elements in textual interpretation and English language arts instruction. You have probably already encountered and used most of the concepts in the college-level courses you have taken as part of your career preparation.

The following books, articles, and web sites are particularly relevant to the types of knowledge, topics, and skills covered by the test.

Note: The test is not based on these resources, nor do they necessarily cover every topic that may be included in the test. Instead, these works are intended to help you revisit topics you have already covered in your education and English courses.

Guides to literary terms and methods of interpretation: The following texts can help you review the literary terms and critical approaches highlighted in this study guide. Each text is organized by central literary terms and their definitions. You can use these texts to look up specific literary concepts; each concept is usually illustrated through references to classic literary works with which you are likely to be familiar already.

Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 10th ed. Boston: Wadsworth Learning, 2012.

Gale Glossary of Literary Terms http://www.gale.cengage.com/free_resources/glossary/index.htm

Harmon, William, et al. *A Handbook to Literature*, 12th ed. New York: Longman, 2011.

Virtual Salt: A Handbook of Rhetorical Devices http://www.virtualsalt.com/rhetoric.htm Robert A. Harris, 2013.

Guides to teaching reading and teaching writing: The following texts offer overviews of the teaching of reading and writing.

Atwell, Nancie. *In the Middle: New Understandings About Writing, Reading, and Learning, 2nd edition*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, 1998.

Beers, Kylene, Robert Probst, and Linda Rief, eds. *Adolescent Literacy: Turning Promise into Practice*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2007.

Burke, Jim. *The English Teacher's Companion: A Completely New Guide to Classroom, Curriculum, and the Profession*, 4th edition. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2013.

Textual Interpretation Question

The textual interpretation constructed-response question asks you to connect the use of literary devices and techniques to the development of a passage's meaning. You should be prepared to demonstrate your ability to interpret literary texts fully and accurately. Although you have most likely developed this skill over time through your training in your English courses, you may wish to practice and review this skill in preparation for this exam.

Literary Devices

Be familiar with literary devices that are used to create meaning and effect in literature. These devices are the same as those you will have encountered in the selected-response portion of the test (see the first part of this chapter). The devices include, but are not limited to:

- Allusion
- Ambiguity
- Dialogue
- Diction
- Figurative language (such as metaphor, simile, and personification)
- Imagery
- Narrative techniques (such as stream of consciousness)
- Parody
- Point of view
- Rhyme and rhythm
- Specific details (such as details of the setting)
- Symbolism
- Tone

Suggested Study Strategies: Literary Devices

- Using a literary anthology (for example, *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*), select short poems or brief excerpts from prose works. Practice identifying the literary devices used in these texts and connecting those devices to the development of meaning in the work.

- Look up those literary terms with which you are less familiar. Put the definition of each term in your own words. Try finding examples of each term in literature with which you are already familiar, or try to develop your own creative examples.

Teaching Reading/Writing Question

The teaching reading/writing constructed-response question asks you to identify a student's strengths and/or weaknesses based on either an essay or a response to a reading task. You will need to be able to explain why what you have identified is a strength or a weakness and also to describe a teaching strategy that builds on either the identified strength or weakness. As with your literary interpretation skills, you have most likely developed these skills over time through your training in English language arts instruction.

Teaching Reading

Be familiar with common comprehension and vocabulary terms and strategies, such as the following:

- Context clues
- Predicting
- Prior knowledge
- Summarizing
- Text difficulty

Teaching Writing

Be familiar with common strengths and weaknesses in student writing, such as the following:

- Essay organization
- Paragraph organization
- Quality of descriptive detail
- Sentence variety and complexity
- Sense of audience
- Sense of voice

Suggested strategies for studying the teaching of reading/writing

Be able to develop targeted writing or reading assignments that build on the strengths and weaknesses of individual students' writing or reading comprehension. In the previous "What to Study" section, see the list of resources you can use to help you prepare.

What the Test Scorers Are Looking For

Even if you feel confident about your knowledge of the content to be tested, you still may wonder how you will be able to tell what the test scorers want.

In fact, you can find out what the test scorers want by looking at the questions themselves. The constructed-response test questions are crafted to be as clear as possible regarding what tasks you are expected to do. No expectations are hidden in the question or expressed in code words. The English language arts educators who score your responses base your score on two considerations:

- Whether you do the tasks that the question asks for
- How well you do those tasks

So, to answer more specifically the question "What do the scorers want?" we should look at test questions, much like the ones on the test.

Understanding What the Questions Are Asking

It is impossible to write a successful response to a question unless you thoroughly understand the question. Often test takers jump into their written response without taking enough time to analyze exactly what the question is asking, how many different parts of the question need to be addressed, and *how the information provided in the excerpt can be used to support the answer*. The time you invest in making sure you understand what the question is asking will very likely pay off in a better performance, as long as you budget your time and do not spend a large proportion of the available time just reading the question.

To illustrate the importance of understanding the question before you begin writing, let's look at a sample question:

Sample Question: Textual Interpretation

> *"Why, thank you so much. I'd adore to."*
> I don't want to dance with him. I don't want to dance with anybody. And even if I did, it wouldn't be him. He'd be well down among the last ten. I've seen the way he dances. . . . Just think, not a quarter of an hour ago, here I was sitting, feeling sorry for the poor girl he was dancing with. And now I'm going to be the poor girl.

"The Waltz," a short story by humorist Dorothy Parker, opens with the lines above. Explain how Parker establishes tone and uses perspective in the excerpt.

Identifying the Key Components of the Question

- How does Parker establish tone?
- How does Parker use perspective?

Organizing Your Response

Successful responses start with successful planning, either in the form of an outline or another form of notes. By planning your response, you greatly decrease the chances that you will forget to answer any part of the question. You also increase the chances of creating a well-organized response. Your note-taking space also gives you a place to jot down thoughts whenever you think of them—for example, when you have an idea about one part of the question when you are writing your response to another part. Planning your response is time well invested, although you must keep your eye on the clock so that you have sufficient time to write your response.

To illustrate a possible strategy for planning a response, let us focus again on the sample question introduced above. We analyzed the question and found that it necessitated a two-part response. You might begin by jotting down those parts on your notes page, leaving space under each. This will ensure that you address each part when you begin writing. In addition, you should underline key parts of the passage that can serve as examples in your response.

Sample Notes—Main Parts to be Answered

Here you start by identifying each part of the question:

- *How does Parker establish tone?*
- *How does Parker use perspective?*

You then might quickly fill out the main ideas you want to address in each part, like this:

Sample Notes—Ideas Under Each Main Part

How does Parker establish tone?
   — Use of contrast
   — Exaggeration

How does Parker use perspective?
   — First-person point of view
   — Use of dialogue and internal monologue

Writing Your Response

Now the important step of writing your response begins. The scorers will not consider your notes when they score your paper, so it is crucial that you integrate all the important ideas from your notes into your actual written response.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 3

Dorothy Parker tells the story in the first person with two contrasting perspectives: what her character says and what she is really thinking. This sets an amusing and intimate tone throughout the excerpt.
   Contributing to the sense of intimacy with her character is the conversational tone of her thoughts. Immediately the reader identifies with the character. Also, the use of present tense, so we are overhearing the character's thoughts as she is having them, contributes to the intimacy of the internal dialogue. When she says that she didn't want to dance with anyone, and even if she did "it wouldn't be him," it feels like the character is having a private conversation with the reader. Finally, the reader is left with a feeling of ironic amusement. The character who so politely agrees to dance has just been feeling sorry for her partner's previous victim: "Just think, not a quarter of an hour ago, here I was sitting, feeling sorry for the poor girl he was dancing with. And now I'm going to be the poor girl." Again, the reader identifies with the intimate tone the character uses since at one time or another most of us have also agreed to do something we would have preferred not to, just to be polite.

Comments on Sample Response That Earned a Score of 3

This is a successful response because it addresses and analyzes the aspects of tone and perspective thoughtfully and in depth. Not only does the response identify the first person perspective, but it also recognizes the duality of the perspective in "what her character says and what she is really thinking." These "contrasting perspectives" reveal the outwardly proper and polite narrator, while the internal comments reflect the "ironic amusement" that she is now the "poor girl" who is the next "victim" of the awkward dance partner.

The words "amusing" and "intimate" accurately describe the tone of the piece, and the writer further analyzes how the tone establishes a connection ("the reader identifies") between the character and the reader, which adds to the intimacy and ironic humor of the piece.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 2

The tone of the story is humorous. Dorothy Parker does not want to dance with the man. While she says yes, she is thinking just the opposite. It's funny because in the first line of the story she says she would like to dance; "Why, thank you so much. I'd adore to." But in her mind, she is thinking about how much she does not want to dance with him. He would be one of the last people she'd dance with; "down among the last ten." She also makes fun of the "poor girl" that he danced with before her. She believes that when she dances with him, she will look as bad as the "poor girl," she does not want to look that bad. The story is funny because Dorothy Parker gets put in a tricky social situation.

Comments on Sample Response That Received a Score of 2

While recognizing that the excerpt is intended to be humorous, the response is limited and provides only a superficial analysis of the subject matter. The writer identifies the fundamental conflict in Parker's excerpt: the speaker does not want to dance, but she cordially agrees when asked. However, the response does not go on to provide an in-depth analysis of how Parker uses first person perspective to establish a humorous, ironic tone in her short story.

Furthermore, the response demonstrates a crucial misreading of the excerpt by positing that the speaker is also making fun of the "poor girl." In truth, the speaker was in sympathy with the "poor girl" and finds it ironic that she will now be the "poor girl" dancing with the young man.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 1

In the above passage, Parker establishes tone with short, precise sentences, gradually getting longer. She used perspective in dealing with the fact that she does not want to dance and especially with him. She also was putting herself in the other girl's position.

Comments on Sample Response That Received a Score of 1

This response reveals a weak understanding of tone and perspective. It is severely underdeveloped, lacks analysis and, moreover, includes a glaring misread of the piece. The explanation of how Parker establishes tone is limited to merely describing sentence style, and the writer's analysis of perspective is wrong. The response restates the central premise that "she does not want to dance and especially with him." This is followed by a misread of the ironic moment, as reflected in a reference to "the other girl's position" that misses the point that Parker is now in the position of the girl she earlier pitied.

Sample Question: Teaching Writing

Introduction

Students in a seventh-grade class were asked to write a descriptive essay, for an audience of their peers, in response to an assignment about a favorite person. What follows is the final draft of one student's response to this assignment. Read the student's response carefully, paying particular attention to the features of writing listed below, and then complete the three tasks that follow the student's response.

Features of Writing

- Focus/Thesis
- Organization
- Content/Supporting Ideas
- Sentence variety and complexity

Student Response

There are a lot of people that are important to me. My family, friends, and many more, but I know that my Aunt Pat is high on the list.

My Aunt Pat is someone I truly care about. Aunt Pat is always there for me. She makes me happy when I am sad. She also cheers me up when I am sad. Another reason I care for her is because we have the same interests. Pat likes to sew, scrapbook, and march in parades.

Pat is a great role model. She always tries to do the right thing. She is also very enthusiastic. Pat has many traits. She is reliable, cool, funny, and most of all she is creative. I love that she is a creative person. Currently she owns the costume shop in town. She also likes fall. She thinks it is pretty. Most people like winter because of Christmas, or summer because of the heat, but she has her own mind. She likes fall. I also love that she isn't afraid to be different.

In the end there are many reasons why I love her. She makes you feel like you are the most important person in the world and nobody can take that away from you.

Tasks

1. Identify one feature of the student's writing as a strength. Be sure to support your response with examples from the student's writing. Do NOT discuss facility in the conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation) in this part of your response.

2. Identify one feature of the student's writing as a weakness. Be sure to support your response with examples from the student's writing. Do NOT discuss the errors in the conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation) in this part of your response.

3. Describe one follow-up assignment you would give to this student that would build on the strength you described in Task 1 OR address the weakness that you identified in Task 2. Explain how the assignment would help the student.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 3

One strength of this student's descriptive essay is attention to the task of writing about a favorite person, which is established in a nicely stated (albeit structurally flawed) opening paragraph. "…my Aunt Pat is high on the list." All subsequent discussion is about Aunt Pat—who cheers, who shares interests, who is a "great role model," who is creative ("Currently she owns the costume shop in town."), who likes fall when winter and Christmas or summer are the more typical seasonal preferences.

However, the weakness in this essay is that this defined focus is not well elaborated with illustrative examples. Aunt Pat is a great role model, but how? "She always tries to do the right thing" but in what way or ways? When the student offers support—"…we have the same interests. Pat likes to sew, scrapbook, and march in parades"—the illustrative details are lacking. Sentences are simple, leaving the reader wishing for those supporting details.

The suggestion for revision, therefore, would be to build on the clear focus, which captures a genuine appreciation of this favorite person by extending the sentences to build interest. The student's respect and love of "Aunt Pat" is charming. The hints at her character (marching in parades, owning the costume shop, "she isn't afraid to be different") are intriguing. But, for example the simple, repetitive statements, "She makes me happy when I am sad. She also cheers me up when I am sad" do not reveal HOW "she is always there for me."

Illustrative examples literally "color in" the lines to make the portrait come alive.

The purpose of the essay is to "describe" a favorite person. The follow up assignment encourages the student to address this purpose. The essay is definitely about one favorite person, but the descriptive details are limited. Adding in one or two stories and a brief example for other points would enhance the fullness of why Aunt Pat is special.

To extend the example above: The student could consider,

"When was one specific moment when Aunt Pat cheered you up?"

In doing this revision with a topic close to the student's heart, the student will gain a better understanding of the value of including descriptive details/supporting ideas when making a point, and, therefore, what is meant by "complex" sentences. The student will gain an understanding that complex sentences that include illustrative detail are applicable in all writing, whether in a descriptive essay or when making a case in a persuasive essay or when addressing a topic in an expository essay.

Comments on Sample Response That Received a Score of 3

This is a successful response because it addresses all three tasks with strong evidence of understanding the features of writing and how to support a student in strengthening an essay.

The response to Task 1 correctly identifies one strength as the focus on a favorite person, as required by the student's assignment. Examples are provided of how the essay centers on descriptions of Aunt Pat's personality and interests. The response to Task 2, identifying one weakness of the essay, notes the limits of those descriptive details: ("…is not well elaborated with illustrative examples"). What follows is an analysis of specific points in the essay that make a statement without explanation or examples. Task 2 is thorough in this analysis.

The response to Task 3 then pointedly addresses what could be done to provide the needed elaboration. These suggestions for revision are very strong, including both what should be done and why these additions would improve the essay: ("Illustrative examples literally 'color in' the lines to make the portrait come alive"). One specific task—directly related to the weakness identified in Task 2—is suggested that would hone an appreciation of descriptive details and enhance an awareness of the concept of "complex sentences." The response shows a clear understanding of how actions by the teacher could support the student's skills and appreciation of writing.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 2

The student who wrote the essay has great focus and gives lots of details. She describes her Aunt Pat and how much she likes her. Then she goes on to provide details: her Aunt Pat "cheers her up" and is a "great role model." The student also describes things that Aunt Pat likes to do: "sew, scrapbook, and march in parades" and says that she "owns the costume shop in town." I would say that a strength of this essay is how the student keeps the focus on Aunt Pat while also giving so many details about what her Aunt is like and what she does. The content and supporting details are what make this essay so enjoyable to read.

The weakness, however, is that the essay isn't very organized. The statements about Aunt Pat do not follow a logical pattern. The student should have made an outline before writing, each paragraph should have contained a separate supporting detail about her aunt. For example, the student could have had a whole paragraph about the costume shop and what kinds of costumes her aunt sold. It would have been very interesting to know whether she only sold Halloween costumes or whether she sold costumes for other parties. Also the writer could have had a whole paragraph about what kinds of parades her aunt marches in and why she likes parades.

For a follow-up assignment, I would ask the student to describe another favorite person and to give plenty of details about why that person is special. It wouldn't have to be a family member, this time it could be a friend. It would be interesting to read about someone who is the students' age and has the same interests as the student. Then the student could also talk about his or her own likes and dislikes. That would give readers a picture of the student; then we would know the student and her favorite people.

Comments on Sample Response That Received a Score of 2

The response above identifies both a strength and weakness of the student essay; however, they are only superficially described. For example, the response does identify a lack of organization as a weakness of the essay, but the analysis is not very strong. Adding entire paragraphs about the costume shop or about parades would not address the focus of the piece—why Aunt Pat is important to the student. While the response does provide a follow-up assignment, that assignment does not address the strength or weakness described in the response. Furthermore, the response also fails to explain why the assignment would be useful in building on a strength or improving a weakness. In summary, the response received a score of 2 not only because it provides a superficial analysis of a strength and a weakness, but also because it does not fully address the questions posed in the three tasks.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 1

This student really loves her Aunt Pat! She sounds like a fun person. As a scrapbooker, I know how much creative energy is needed. Aunt Pat is creative. The student says, "most of all she is creative" and she backs this up with the detail that the aunt owns a costume shop! And Aunt Pat loves fall, even when most people like winter "because of Christmas" and summer "because of the heat." These are good details of how Aunt Pat "isn't afraid of being different."

The essay makes a good case why Aunt Pat is a favorite person.

However, it is not perfect! I would have this student fix the fragments, like in the first paragraph. For example, "Some of those important people are my family, friends and many more, but I know that my Aunt Pat is high on the list." It is important to have the verb in that sentence to make it a sentence and not a fragment.

It is really important to write in complete sentences. This would be important to help the student become a better writer.

Comments on Sample Response That Received a Score of 1

Though one strength of the essay is noted ("The essay makes a good case why Aunt Pat is a favorite person"), the student's response is given too much credit for "good details" that are actually underdeveloped.

The attempt to respond to Task 2 addresses a grammatical weakness—fragmented sentences ("It is important to have a verb in that sentence...")—even though the prompt specifies NOT to discuss errors in grammar or punctuation.

The response to Task 3 is weak because it addresses remediation of grammar ("write in complete sentences") and because the example cited ("Some of those ... high on the list") is incorrectly listed as a sentence fragment.

Compounding the weak response is its lack of a recommended teacher-directed remedial activity or counseling. Enthusiasm for the student's response does not provide a basis for helping the student strengthen this essay.

In Conclusion

Whatever format you select, the important thing is that your answer be thorough, complete, and detailed. You need to be certain that you do the following:

- Answer all parts of the question.
- Give reasons for your answers.
- Demonstrate subject-specific knowledge in your answer.
- Refer to the examples in the passage provided.

It is a good idea to use the practice test in the next chapter to help you develop a plan for how you will take the test on the actual testing day, especially if you tend to get nervous or freeze up in a testing situation. Some test takers prefer to start with the question with which they feel most comfortable. Remember to consider your time so that you may give appropriate consideration to both essay questions. Stay within the framework of the question.

7. Review Smart Tips for Success

Follow test-taking tips developed by experts

Learn from the experts. Take advantage of the following answers to questions you may have and practical tips to help you navigate the *Praxis* test and make the best use of your time.

Should I guess?

Yes. Your score is based on the number of questions you answer correctly, with no penalty or subtraction for an incorrect answer. When you don't know the answer to a question, try to eliminate any obviously wrong answers and then guess at the correct one. Try to pace yourself so that you have enough time to carefully consider every question.

Can I answer the questions in any order?

You can answer the questions in order or skip questions and come back to them later. If you skip a question, you can also mark it so that you can remember to return and answer it later. Remember that questions left unanswered are treated the same as questions answered incorrectly, so it is to your advantage to answer every question.

Are there trick questions on the test?

No. There are no hidden meanings or trick questions. All of the questions on the test ask about subject matter knowledge in a straightforward manner.

Are there answer patterns on the test?

No. You might have heard this myth: the answers on tests follow patterns. Another myth is that there will never be more than two questions in a row with the correct answer in the same position among the choices. Neither myth is true. Select the answer you think is correct based on your knowledge of the subject.

Can I write on the scratch paper I am given?

Yes. You can work out problems on the scratch paper, make notes to yourself, or write anything at all. Your scratch paper will be destroyed after you are finished with it, so use it in any way that is helpful to you. But make sure to select or enter your answers on the computer.

Smart Tips for Taking the Test

1. **Skip the questions you find extremely difficult.** Rather than trying to answer these on your first pass through the test, you may want to leave them blank and mark them so that you can return to them later. Pay attention to the time as you answer the rest of the questions on the test, and try to finish with 10 or 15 minutes remaining so that you can go back over the questions you left blank. Even if you don't know the answer the second time you read the questions, see if you can narrow down the possible answers, and then guess. Your score is based on the number of right answers, so it is to your advantage to answer every question.

2. **Keep track of the time.** The on-screen clock will tell you how much time you have left. You will probably have plenty of time to answer all of the questions, but if you find yourself becoming bogged down, you might decide to move on and come back to any unanswered questions later.

3. **Read all of the possible answers before selecting one.** For questions that require you to select more than one answer, or to make another kind of selection, consider the most likely answers given what the question is asking. Then reread the question to be sure the answer(s) you have given really answer the question. Remember, a question that contains a phrase such as "Which of the following does NOT …" is asking for the one answer that is NOT a correct statement or conclusion.

4. **Check your answers.** If you have extra time left over at the end of the test, look over each question and make sure that you have answered it as you intended. Many test takers make careless mistakes that they could have corrected if they had checked their answers.

5. **Don't worry about your score when you are taking the test.** No one is expected to answer all of the questions correctly. Your score on this test is not analogous to your score on the *GRE*® or other tests. It doesn't matter on the *Praxis* tests whether you score very high or barely pass. If you meet the minimum passing scores for your state and you meet the state's other requirements for obtaining a teaching license, you will receive a license. In other words, what matters is meeting the minimum passing score. You can find passing scores for all states that use the *Praxis* tests at http://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/passing_scores.pdf or on the web site of the state for which you are seeking certification/licensure.

6. **Use your energy to take the test, not to get frustrated by it.** Getting frustrated only increases stress and decreases the likelihood that you will do your best. Highly qualified educators and test development professionals, all with backgrounds in teaching, worked diligently to make the test a fair and valid measure of your knowledge and skills. Your state painstakingly reviewed the test before adopting it as a licensure requirement. The best thing to do is concentrate on answering the questions.

8. Check on Testing Accommodations

See if you qualify for accommodations that may make it easier to take the Praxis *test*

What if English is not my primary language?

Praxis tests are given only in English. If your primary language is not English (PLNE), you may be eligible for extended testing time. For more details, visit https://www.ets.org/praxis/register/plne_accommodations/.

What if I have a disability or other health-related need?

The following accommodations are available for *Praxis* test takers who meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Amendments Act disability requirements:

- Extended testing time
- Additional rest breaks
- Separate testing room
- Writer/recorder of answers
- Test reader
- Sign language interpreter for spoken directions only
- Perkins Brailler
- Braille slate and stylus
- Printed copy of spoken directions
- Oral interpreter
- Audio test
- Braille test
- Large print test book
- Large print answer sheet
- Listening section omitted

For more information on these accommodations, visit www.ets.org/praxis/register/disabilities.

Note: Test takers who have health-related needs requiring them to bring equipment, beverages, or snacks into the testing room or to take extra or extended breaks must request these accommodations by following the procedures described in the *Bulletin Supplement for Test Takers with Disabilities or Health-Related Needs* (PDF), which can be found at http://www.ets.org/s/disabilities/pdf/bulletin_supplement_test_takers_with_disabilities_health_needs.pdf.

You can find additional information on available resources for test takers with disabilities or health-related needs at www.ets.org/disabilities.

9. Do Your Best on Test Day

Get ready for test day so you will be calm and confident

You followed your study plan. You prepared for the test. Now it's time to prepare for test day.

Plan to end your review a day or two before the actual test date so you avoid cramming. Take a dry run to the test center so you're sure of the route, traffic conditions, and parking. Most of all, you want to eliminate any unexpected factors that could distract you from your ultimate goal—passing the *Praxis* test!

On the day of the test, you should:

- be well rested
- wear comfortable clothes and dress in layers
- eat before you take the test
- bring an acceptable and valid photo identification with you
- bring an approved calculator only if one is specifically permitted for the test you are taking (see Calculator Use, at http://www.ets.org/praxis/test_day/policies/calculators)
- be prepared to stand in line to check in or to wait while other test takers check in

You can't control the testing situation, but you can control yourself. Stay calm. The supervisors are well trained and make every effort to provide uniform testing conditions, but don't let it bother you if the test doesn't start exactly on time. You will have the allotted amount of time once it does start.

You can think of preparing for this test as training for an athletic event. Once you've trained, prepared, and rested, give it everything you've got.

What items am I restricted from bringing into the test center?

You cannot bring into the test center personal items such as:

- handbags, knapsacks, or briefcases
- water bottles or canned or bottled beverages
- study materials, books, or notes
- pens, pencils, scrap paper, or calculators, unless specifically permitted for the test you are taking (see Calculator Use, at http://www.ets.org/praxis/test_day/policies/calculators)
- any electronic, photographic, recording, or listening devices

Personal items are not allowed in the testing room and will not be available to you during the test or during breaks. You may also be asked to empty your pockets. At some centers, you will be assigned a space to store your belongings, such as handbags and study materials. Some centers do not have secure storage space available, so please plan accordingly.

Test centers assume no responsibility for your personal items.

If you have health-related needs requiring you to bring equipment, beverages or snacks into the testing room or to take extra or extended breaks, you need to request accommodations in advance. Procedures for requesting accommodations are described in the **Bulletin Supplement for Test Takers with Disabilities or Health-related Needs (PDF)**.

Note: All cell phones, smart phones (e.g., Android® devices, iPhones®, etc.), and other electronic, photographic, recording, or listening devices are strictly prohibited from the test center. If you are seen with such a device, you will be dismissed from the test, your test scores will be canceled, and you will forfeit your test fees. If you are seen *using* such a device, the device will be confiscated and inspected. For more information on what you can bring to the test center, visit **www.ets.org/praxis/test_day/bring**.

Are You Ready?

Complete this checklist to determine whether you are ready to take your test.

❐ Do you know the testing requirements for the license or certification you are seeking in the state(s) where you plan to teach?

❐ Have you followed all of the test registration procedures?

❐ Do you know the topics that will be covered in each test you plan to take?

❐ Have you reviewed any textbooks, class notes, and course readings that relate to the topics covered?

❐ Do you know how long the test will take and the number of questions it contains?

❐ Have you considered how you will pace your work?

❐ Are you familiar with the types of questions for your test?

❐ Are you familiar with the recommended test-taking strategies?

❐ Have you practiced by working through the practice questions in this study companion or in a study guide or practice test?

❐ If constructed-response questions are part of your test, do you understand the scoring criteria for these questions?

❐ If you are repeating a *Praxis* test, have you analyzed your previous score report to determine areas where additional study and test preparation could be useful?

If you answered "yes" to the questions above, your preparation has paid off. Now take the *Praxis* test, do your best, pass it—and begin your teaching career!

10. Understand Your Scores

Understand how tests are scored and how to interpret your test scores

Of course, passing the *Praxis* test is important to you so you need to understand what your scores mean and what your state requirements are.

What are the score requirements for my state?

States, institutions, and associations that require the tests set their own passing scores. Visit www.ets.org/praxis/states for the most up-to-date information.

If I move to another state, will my new state accept my scores?

The *Praxis* tests are part of a national testing program, meaning that they are required in many states for licensure. The advantage of a national program is that if you move to another state that also requires *Praxis* tests, you can transfer your scores. Each state has specific test requirements and passing scores, which you can find at www.ets.org/praxis/states.

How do I know whether I passed the test?

Your score report will include information on passing scores for the states you identified as recipients of your test results. If you test in a state with automatic score reporting, you will also receive passing score information for that state.

A list of states and their passing scores for each test are available online at www.ets.org/praxis/states.

What your *Praxis* scores mean

You received your score report. Now what does it mean? It's important to interpret your score report correctly and to know what to do if you have questions about your scores.

Visit http://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/sample_score_report.pdf to see a sample score report.
To access *Understanding Your Praxis Scores*, a document that provides additional information on how to read your score report, visit www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand.

Put your scores in perspective

Your score report indicates:

- Your score and whether you passed
- The range of possible scores
- The raw points available in each content category
- The range of the middle 50 percent of scores on the test

If you have taken the same *Praxis* test or other *Praxis* tests in the last 10 years, your score report also lists the highest score you earned on each test taken.

Content category scores and score interpretation

Questions on the *Praxis* tests are categorized by content. To help you in future study or in preparing to retake the test, your score report shows how many raw points you earned in each content category. Compare your "raw points earned" with the maximum points you could have earned ("raw points available"). The greater the difference, the greater the opportunity to improve your score by further study.

Score scale changes

ETS updates *Praxis* tests on a regular basis to ensure they accurately measure the knowledge and skills that are required for licensure. When tests are updated, the meaning of the score scale may change, so requirements may vary between the new and previous versions. All scores for previous, discontinued tests are valid and reportable for 10 years, provided that your state or licensing agency still accepts them.

These resources may also help you interpret your scores:

- *Understanding Your Praxis Scores* (PDF), found at **www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand**

- *The Praxis Passing Scores* (PDF), found at **www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand**

- State requirements, found at **www.ets.org/praxis/states**

Appendix: Other Questions You May Have

Here is some supplemental information that can give you a better understanding of the *Praxis* tests.

What do the *Praxis* tests measure?

The *Praxis* tests measure the specific knowledge and skills that beginning teachers need. The tests do not measure an individual's disposition toward teaching or potential for success, nor do they measure your actual teaching ability. The assessments are designed to be comprehensive and inclusive but are limited to what can be covered in a finite number of questions and question types. Teaching requires many complex skills that are typically measured in other ways, including classroom observation, video recordings, and portfolios.

Ranging from Agriculture to World Languages, there are more than 80 *Praxis* tests, which contain selected-response questions or constructed-response questions, or a combination of both.

Who takes the tests and why?

Some colleges and universities use the *Praxis* Core Academic Skills for Educators tests (Reading, Writing, and Mathematics) to evaluate individuals for entry into teacher education programs. The assessments are generally taken early in your college career. Many states also require Core Academic Skills test scores as part of their teacher licensing process.

Individuals entering the teaching profession take the *Praxis* content and pedagogy tests as part of the teacher licensing and certification process required by many states. In addition, some professional associations and organizations require the *Praxis* Subject Assessments for professional licensing.

Do all states require these tests?

The *Praxis* tests are currently required for teacher licensure in approximately 40 states and United States territories. These tests are also used by several professional licensing agencies and by several hundred colleges and universities. Teacher candidates can test in one state and submit their scores in any other state that requires *Praxis* testing for licensure. You can find details at www.ets.org/praxis/states.

What is licensure/certification?

Licensure in any area—medicine, law, architecture, accounting, cosmetology—is an assurance to the public that the person holding the license possesses sufficient knowledge and skills to perform important occupational activities safely and effectively. In the case of teacher licensing, a license tells the public that the individual has met predefined competency standards for beginning teaching practice.

Because a license makes such a serious claim about its holder, licensure tests are usually quite demanding. In some fields, licensure tests have more than one part and last for more than one day. Candidates for licensure in all fields plan intensive study as part of their professional preparation. Some join study groups, others study alone. But preparing to take a licensure test is, in all cases, a professional activity. Because a licensure exam surveys a broad body of knowledge, preparing for a licensure exam takes planning, discipline, and sustained effort.

Why does my state require the *Praxis* tests?

Your state chose the *Praxis* tests because they assess the breadth and depth of content—called the "domain"—that your state wants its teachers to possess before they begin to teach. The level of content knowledge, reflected in the passing score, is based on recommendations of panels of teachers and teacher educators in

each subject area. The state licensing agency and, in some states, the state legislature ratify the passing scores that have been recommended by panels of teachers.

How were the tests developed?

ETS consulted with practicing teachers and teacher educators around the country during every step of the *Praxis* test development process. First, ETS asked them what knowledge and skills a beginning teacher needs to be effective. Their responses were then ranked in order of importance and reviewed by hundreds of teachers.

After the results were analyzed and consensus was reached, guidelines, or specifications, for the selected-response and constructed-response tests were developed by teachers and teacher educators. Following these guidelines, teachers and professional test developers created test questions that met content requirements and *ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness*.*

When your state adopted the research-based *Praxis* tests, local panels of teachers and teacher educators evaluated each question for its relevance to beginning teachers in your state. During this "validity study," the panel also provided a passing-score recommendation based on how many of the test questions a beginning teacher in your state would be able to answer correctly. Your state's licensing agency determined the final passing-score requirement.

ETS follows well-established industry procedures and standards designed to ensure that the tests measure what they are intended to measure. When you pass the *Praxis* tests your state requires, you are proving that you have the knowledge and skills you need to begin your teaching career.

How are the tests updated to ensure the content remains current?

Praxis tests are reviewed regularly. During the first phase of review, ETS conducts an analysis of relevant state and association standards and of the current test content. State licensure titles and the results of relevant job analyses are also considered. Revised test questions are then produced following the standard test development methodology. National advisory committees may also be convened to review and revise existing test specifications and to evaluate test forms for alignment with the specifications.

How long will it take to receive my scores?

Scores for tests that do not include constructed-response questions are available on screen immediately after the test. Scores for tests that contain constructed-response questions or essays aren't available immediately after the test because of the scoring process involved. Official score reports are available to you and your designated score recipients approximately two to three weeks after the test date for tests delivered continuously, or two to three weeks after the testing window closes for other tests. See the test dates and deadlines calendar at www. ets.org/praxis/register/centers_dates for exact score reporting dates.

Can I access my scores on the web?

All test takers can access their test scores via My *Praxis* Account free of charge for one year from the posting date. This online access replaces the mailing of a paper score report.

The process is easy—simply log into My *Praxis* Account at www.ets.org/praxis and click on your score report. If you do not already have a *Praxis* account, you must create one to view your scores.

Note: You must create a *Praxis* account to access your scores, even if you registered by mail or phone.

ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness (2014, Princeton, N.J.) are consistent with the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, industry standards issued jointly by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education (2014, Washington, D.C.).

Your teaching career is worth preparing for, so start today!

Let the *Praxis® Study Companion* guide you.

To search for the *Praxis* test prep resources that meet your specific needs, visit:

www.ets.org/praxis/testprep

To purchase official test prep made by the creators of the *Praxis* tests, visit the ETS Store:

www.ets.org/praxis/store

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