

OKLAHOMA SCHOOL TESTING PROGRAM OKLAHOMA CORE CURRICULUM TESTS

TEST SPECIFICATIONS

Reading
Grade 5



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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this test is to measure Oklahoma fifth-grade students' level of proficiency in reading. On the Grade 5 Reading Test, students are required to respond to a variety of items linked to the fifth-grade reading content standards identified in the *Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS)*. Each Reading Test form tests each identified content standard and objective listed below. The following standards and objectives are intended to summarize the knowledge as identified in *PASS*.

<i>PASS</i> Content Standards and Objectives
Vocabulary <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Words in Context (1.1)• Affixes, Roots, and Stems (1.2)• Synonyms, Antonyms, and Homonyms (1.3)
Comprehension/Critical Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Literal Understanding (3.1)• Inferences and Interpretation (3.2)• Summary and Generalization (3.3)• Analysis and Evaluation (3.4)
Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Literary Genres (4.1)• Literary Elements (4.2)• Figurative Language/Sound Devices (4.3)
Research and Information <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessing Information (5.1)• Interpreting Information (5.2)

2. PRIORITY ACADEMIC STUDENT SKILLS**LANGUAGE ARTS****Grade 5**

Asterisks (*) have been used to identify standards and objectives that must be assessed by the local school district. All other skills may be assessed by the Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP).

Reading/Literature: The student will apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, appreciate, and respond to a wide variety of texts.

Standard 1: Vocabulary—The student will develop and expand their knowledge of words and word meanings to increase their vocabulary.

1. Words in Context
 - a. Use knowledge of word parts and word relationships, as well as context clues (the meaning of the text around a word), to determine the meaning of specialized vocabulary and to understand the precise meaning of grade-level-appropriate words.
 - b. Use prior experience and context to understand and explain the figurative use of words and similes (comparisons that use *like* or *as*: *His feet were as big as boats*), and metaphors (implied comparisons: *The giants steps were thunderous*).
2. Affixes, Roots, and Stems
 - a. Interpret new words by analyzing the meaning of prefixes and suffixes.
 - b. Apply knowledge of root words to determine the meaning of unknown words within a passage.
 - c. Use word origins, including knowledge of less common roots (*graph* = *writing*, *terras* = *earth*) and word parts (*hemi* = *half*, *bio* = *life*) from Greek and Latin to analyze the meaning of complex words (*terrain*, *hemisphere*, *biography*).
3. Synonyms, Antonyms, and Homonyms—Apply knowledge of fifth grade level synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, and multiple meaning words to determine the meaning of words and phrases.
- *4. Using Resource Materials and Aids
 - a. Use a thesaurus to determine related words and concepts.
 - b. Determine the meanings, pronunciation, and derivations of unknown words by using a glossary and/or dictionary.

***Standard 2: Fluency—The student will identify words rapidly so that attention is directed at the meaning of the text.**

1. Read regularly in independent-level texts (texts in which no more than approximately 1 in 20 words is difficult for the reader) fluently and accurately, and with appropriate timing, change in voice, and expression.
2. Read regularly in instructional-level texts (texts in which no more than approximately 1 in 10 words is difficult for the reader; a “typical” fifth grader reads approximately 105 words per minute).
3. Read silently for increased periods of time.
4. Increase silent reading speed through daily independent reading.

Standard 3: Comprehension/Critical Literacy—The student will interact with the words and concepts in the text to construct an appropriate meaning.

1. Literal Understanding
 - a. Use prereading strategies independently (to preview, activate prior knowledge, predict content of text, formulate questions that might be answered by the text, and establish purpose for reading).
 - b. Read and comprehend both fiction and nonfiction that is appropriately designed for fifth grade.
 - c. Recognize main ideas presented in a particular segment of text; identify and assess evidence that supports those ideas.
 - d. Use the text’s structure or progression of ideas such as cause and effect or chronology to organize or recall information.
2. Inferences and Interpretation
 - a. Apply prior knowledge and experience to make inferences and respond to new information presented in text.
 - b. Draw inferences and conclusions about text and support them with textual evidence and prior knowledge.
 - c. Describe elements of character development in written works (e.g., differences between main and minor characters; stereotypical characters as opposed to fully developed characters; changes that characters undergo; the importance of a character’s actions, motives, and appearance to plot and theme).
 - d. Make inferences or draw conclusions about characters’ qualities and actions (e.g., based on knowledge of plot, setting, characters’ motives, characters’ appearances, other characters’ responses to a character).
 - *e. Participate in creative response to text (e.g., art, drama, and oral presentation).

3. Summary and Generalization
 - a. Summarize and paraphrase information from entire reading selection including the main idea and significant supporting details.
 - b. Make generalizations with information gleaned from text.
 - c. Support ideas and arguments by reference to relevant aspects of text and issues across texts.
 - d. Organize text information in different ways (e.g., timeline, outline, graphic organizer) to support and explain ideas.
4. Analysis and Evaluation
 - a. Identify and analyze the characteristics of poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction and explain the appropriateness of the literary form chosen by an author for a specific purpose.
 - b. Identify the main problem or conflict of the plot and explain how it is resolved.
 - c. Contrast the actions, motives, and appearances of characters in a work of fiction and discuss the importance of the contrasts to the plot or theme.
 - d. Make observations and connections, react, speculate, interpret, and raise questions in analysis of texts.
 - e. Recognize structural patterns found in information text (e.g., cause/effect, problem/solution, sequential order).
 - f. Distinguish among facts and inferences supported by evidence and opinions in text.
- *5. Monitoring and Correction Strategies
 - a. Monitor own reading and modify strategies as needed when understanding breaks down (e.g., rereading a portion aloud, using reference aids, searching for clues, and asking questions).
 - b. Predict, monitor, and cross-check using semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic cues.
 - c. Monitor and adjust reading rate according to the purpose for reading and the difficulty of the text.

Standard 4: Literature—The student will read to contrast meaning and respond to a wide variety of literary forms.

1. Literary Genres—Demonstrate knowledge of and appreciation for various forms (genres) of literature.
 - a. Recognize characteristics of literary genres and forms (e.g., contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction, nonfiction, modern fantasy, poetry, drama, and traditional stories such as fairy tales, fables, myths, and legends).

- b. Read and construct meaning from a variety of genres.
 - c. Demonstrate an understanding of similarities and differences within and among literary works of various genre and cultures (e.g., in terms of settings, character types, events, and role of natural phenomena).
2. Literary Elements—Demonstrate knowledge of literary elements and techniques and how they affect the development of a literary work.
 - a. Develop a knowledge of the literary elements of fiction (plot, problems, attempts to resolve conflicts, resolution, etc.) and the text structure of nonfiction (compare/contrast, cause/effect, sequence, main idea, and details).
 - b. Compare/contrast genres, themes, ideas, and story elements across texts read, listened to, or viewed.
 - c. Identify the author’s purpose (persuade, inform, or entertain).
 - d. Recognize and identify the writer’s perspective or point of view in a literary selection (e.g., first person, second person) and how it affects the text.
3. Figurative Language and Sound Devices—Identify figurative language and sound devices in writing and how they affect the development of a literary work.
 - a. Identify and discuss certain words and rhythmic patterns that can be used in a selection to imitate sounds (e.g., rhythm, rhyme, alliteration).
 - b. Evaluate and identify figurative language, such as simile, metaphors, hyperbole, personification, and idioms.
 - c. Identify the function and effect of common literary devices, such as imagery, metaphor, and symbolism.
 - Symbolism: the use of an object to represent something else; for example, a dove might symbolize peace.
 - Imagery: the use of language to create vivid pictures in the reader’s mind.
 - Metaphor: an implied comparison in which a word or phrase is used in place of another, such as *He was drowning in money*.
 - d. Interpret poetry and recognize poetic styles (e.g., rhymed, free verse, and patterned [cinquain, diamante]).
- *4. Literary Works—Read and respond to historically and culturally significant works of literature.

Example: Compare and analyze literary works from various cultures.

Standard 5: Research and Information: The student will conduct research and organize information.

1. Accessing Information—Select the best source for a given purpose.
 - a. Determine and use appropriate sources for accessing information including, dictionaries, thesaurus, electronic card catalogs and databases, magazines, newspapers, technology/Internet, encyclopedias, atlases, almanacs, tables of contents, glossaries, and indexes.
 - b. Identify and credit the sources used to gain information.
 - c. Use text features to access information (e.g., format, italics, headings, subheadings, graphics, sequence, diagrams, illustrations, charts, and maps).
 - d. Use reference features of printed text, such as citations, endnotes, and bibliographies to locate relevant information about a topic.
 - e. Use the features of informational texts, such as formats, graphics, diagrams, illustrations, charts, maps, and organization, to find information and support understanding.

Example: Locate specific information in a social studies textbook by using its organization, sections on different world regions, and textual features, such as headers, maps, and charts.
 - f. Recognize and apply test-taking strategies by answering different levels of questions, such as literal, as well as multiple choice, true/false, short answer, inferential, evaluative, or open-ended.
2. Interpreting Information—Analyze and evaluate information from a variety of sources.
 - a. Follow multistep directions to accomplish a task (e.g., video games, computer programs, recipes).
 - b. Select a topic, formulate questions, and synthesize information from a variety of print, nonprint and technological resources (e.g., dictionaries, reference books, atlases, magazines, informational texts, thesaurus, and technology/Internet).
 - c. Develop notes that include important information on a selected topic.
 - d. Summarize information from multiple sources into a written report or summary.
 - e. Create simple documents using a computer and employing organizational features, such as passwords, entry and pull-down menus, word searches, the thesaurus, and spell checks.

3. TEST STRUCTURE, FORMAT, AND SCORING

The test consists of 60 multiple-choice items, which are written at a fifth-grade reading level and include four responses: the correct answer and three distractors. Each multiple-choice item is scored as correct or incorrect. The student's raw score is converted to a scaled score using the number correct method.

Of the 60 items, 50 items are operational and contribute to a student's scaled score. The other 10 items are field-test items and do not contribute to the student's scaled score.

Test Alignment with *PASS*

Criteria for Aligning the Test with the <i>PASS</i> Standards and Objectives	
1. Categorical Concurrence	The test is constructed so that there are at least six items measuring each <i>PASS</i> standard. The number of items is based on estimating the number of items that could produce a reasonably reliable estimate of a student's mastery of the content measured.
2. Depth of Knowledge Consistency	The test is constructed using items from a variety of Depth of Knowledge levels that are consistent with the processes students need in order to demonstrate proficiency for each <i>PASS</i> objective.
3. Range of Knowledge Correspondence	The test is constructed so that at least 50% of the objectives for a <i>PASS</i> standard have at least one corresponding assessment item.
4. Balance of Representation	The test is constructed according to the Test Blueprint which reflects the degree of representation given on the test to each <i>PASS</i> standard and objective in terms of the percent of total test items measuring each standard and the number of test items measuring each standard and/or objective.
5. Source of Challenge	Each test item is constructed in such a way that the major cognitive demand comes directly from the targeted <i>PASS</i> objective or concept being assessed, not from specialized knowledge or cultural background that the test-taker may bring to the testing situation.

Depth of Knowledge Assessed by Test Items

The test will, as closely as possible, reflect the following “Depth of Knowledge” distribution of items:

Depth of Knowledge	Percent of Items
Level 1—Recall and Reproduction	20–25%
Level 2—Skills and Concepts	60–65%
Level 3—Strategic and Extended Thinking	10–15%

Level 1 (Recall and Reproduction) requires students to receive or recite facts or to use simple skills or abilities. Oral reading that does not include analysis of the text as well as basic comprehension of a text is included. Items require only a shallow understanding of a single word or phrase.

Some examples that represent, but do not constitute, all Level 1 performances are:

- Support ideas by reference to details in the text
- Use a dictionary to find the meaning of words
- Identify figurative language in a reading passage

Level 2 (Skills and Concepts) includes the engagement of some mental processing beyond recalling or reproducing a response; it requires both comprehension and subsequent processing of text or portions of text. Inter-sentence analysis or inference is required. Some important concepts are covered but not in a complex way. Standards and items at this level may include words such as summarize, interpret, infer, classify, organize, collect, display, compare, and determine whether fact or opinion. Literal main ideas are stressed. A Level 2-assessment item may require students to apply some of the skills and concepts that are covered in Level 1.

Some examples that represent, but do not constitute, all Level 2 performances are:

- Use context cues to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words
- Predict a logical outcome based on information in a reading selection
- Identify and summarize the major events in a narrative

Level 3 (Strategic and Extended Thinking) becomes more of a focus at Level 3. Students are encouraged to go beyond the text; however, they are still required to show understanding of the ideas in the text. Students may be encouraged to explain, generalize, or connect ideas. Standards and items at Level 3 involve reasoning and planning and will probably be an extended activity, with extended time provided. The extended time period is not a distinguishing factor if the required work is only repetitive and does not require applying significant conceptual understanding and higher-order thinking. Students take information from at least one passage and are asked to apply this information to a new task. They may also be asked to develop hypotheses and perform complex analyses of the connections among texts, or describe and

illustrate how common themes are found across texts from different cultures. Students must be able to support their thinking. Items may involve abstract theme identification, inference across an entire passage, or students' application of prior knowledge. Items may also involve more superficial connections between texts.

Some examples that represent, but do not constitute, all Level 3 performances are:

- Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources
- Examine and explain alternative perspectives across a variety of sources
- Describe and illustrate how common themes are found across texts from different cultures
- Determine the author's purpose and describe how it affects the interpretation of a reading selection
- Summarize information from multiple sources to address a specific topic
- Analyze and describe the characteristics of various types of literature

Note—The descriptions are adapted from Review Background Information and Instructions, Standards and Assessment Alignment Analysis, CCSSO TILSA Alignment Study, May 21-24, 2001, Version 2.0.

For an extended description of each Depth of Knowledge level, see the student assessment Web site at <<http://sde.state.ok.us>>.

Test Blueprint

The Test Blueprint reflects the degree to which each *PASS* Standard and Objective is represented on the test. The overall distribution of operational items in a test form is intended to match as follows:

<i>PASS</i> Standards & Objectives	Reported on Student Reports*	Ideal Number of Items for Alignment to <i>PASS</i> **	Approximate Percentage of Items on 2008 Test
Vocabulary	Y	12	24%
Words in Context (1.1)	Y	4	
Affixes, Roots, and Stems (1.2)	Y	4	
Synonyms, Antonyms, and Homonyms (1.3)	Y	4	
Comprehension/Critical Literacy	Y	20	40%
Literal Understanding (3.1)	Y	4	
Inferences and Interpretation (3.2)	Y	4–6	
Summary and Generalization (3.3)	Y	4–6	
Analysis and Evaluation (3.4)	Y	4–6	
Literature	Y	12	24%
Literary Genre (4.1)	Y	4	
Literary Elements (4.2)	Y	4	
Figurative Language/Sound Devices (4.3)	Y	4	
Research and Information	Y	6	12%
Assessing Information (5.1)	Y*	2–4	
Interpreting Information (5.2)	Y*	2–4	
Total Test		50	100%

* A minimum of four items is required to report results for a standard or objective.

** While the actual number of items on the test may not match the blueprint, each future test will move toward closer alignment with the ideal blueprint.

- First column represents the standards and objectives in *PASS* assessed on the Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test (OCCT).
- Second column indicates whether an individual student's report will contain this information.
- Third column represents the goal for aligning the OCCT to the *PASS* standards and objectives.
- Fourth column represents the approximate percentage of items from each standard on the 2008 test.

Scoring Criteria

Scoring criteria focus on the clear understanding of the reading process, effective understanding and application of responding to text, and effective understanding and analysis of information and research.

4. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests

This section appears in all of the test specification documents and is provided to give the reader a general sense of the overall testing program at this particular grade level.

Each multiple choice subject test is divided into two separate sections. These two sections of the test may be administered on the same day with a break given between the sections or on consecutive days. Students may be given additional time if needed, but additional time will be given as an extension of the same testing period, not at a different time. There are a total of five subject tests for Grade 5 reflecting the following:

Writing Test

Section 1

Approximately:

- Preparation for test administration 20 minutes
- Administering the Writing Test 50 minutes
- Total: Approximately 70 minutes

Section 2

- Preparation for test administration 5 minutes
- Administering the Writing Test 50 minutes
- Total: Approximately 55 minutes

<p>Mathematics Test Session</p> <p><u>Section 1</u> Approximately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation for test administration 20 minutes Administering the Mathematics Test; no calculators are allowed during this test 30 minutes <p>Total: Approximately 50 minutes</p> <p><u>Section 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation for test administration 5 minutes Administering the Mathematics Test; no calculators are allowed during this test 30 minutes <p>Total: Approximately 35 minutes</p>	<p>Reading Test Session</p> <p><u>Section 1</u> Approximately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation for test administration 10 minutes Administering the Reading Test 45 minutes <p>Total: Approximately 55 minutes</p> <p><u>Section 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation for test administration 5 minutes Administering the Reading Test 45 minutes <p>Total: Approximately 50 minutes</p>
<p>Social Studies Test Session</p> <p><u>Section 1</u> Approximately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation for test administration 10 minutes Administering the Social Studies Test 30 minutes <p>Total: Approximately 40 minutes</p> <p><u>Section 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation for test administration 5 minutes Administering the Social Studies Test 30 minutes <p>Total: Approximately 35 minutes</p>	<p>Science Test Session</p> <p><u>Section 1</u> Approximately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation for test administration 10 minutes Administering the Science Test 30 minutes <p>Total: Approximately 40 minutes</p> <p><u>Section 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation for test administration 5 minutes Administering the Science Test 30 minutes <p>Total: Approximately 35 minutes</p>

1. Items deal with issues and details that are of consequence in the stimulus and central to students' understanding and interpretation of the stimulus.
2. Test items are varied and address all *PASS* standards and objectives listed in the Test Blueprints for Grade 5.
3. To the greatest extent possible, no item or response choice clues the answer to any other item.
4. All items reviewed and approved by the Oklahoma Item-Review Committees are assigned a *PASS* standard and/or objective. The Test Blueprints and score reports reflect the degree to which each *PASS* standard and/or objective is represented on the test.
5. Test items are tied closely and particularly to the stimuli from which they derive, so that the impact of outside (prior) knowledge, while never wholly avoidable, is minimized.
6. Each multiple-choice item contains a question and four answer options, only one of which is correct. Correct answers are approximately equally distributed among As, Bs, Cs, and Ds.
7. The four choices are approximately the same length, have the same format, and are syntactically and semantically parallel; students should not be able to rule out a wrong answer or identify a correct response simply by virtue of its looking or sounding different.
8. Distractors adopt the language and sense of the material in the stimuli so that students must think their way to the correct answer rather than simply identify incorrect responses by virtue of a distractor's obviously inappropriate nature.
9. Distractors should always be plausible (but, of course, incorrect) in the context of the stimulus.
10. Order of presentation of item types is dictated by logic (chronologically, spatially, etc.).
11. Items are worded precisely and clearly. The better focused an item, the more reliable and fair it is likely to be, and the more likely all students will understand it in the same way.
12. It is not possible to measure every *PASS* objective on the test. However, at least 50% of the objectives from each *PASS* standard are included on the test.
13. The range of items measuring a *PASS* objective consisting of more than one skill will provide a balanced representation of those skills.
14. Items should be focused on what all children should know and be able to do as they exit fifth grade.

15. The responses “Both of the above,” “All of the above,” “None of the above,” and “Neither of the above” are not used.
16. The material presented is balanced, culturally diverse, well-written, and of interest to fifth-grade students. The stimuli and items are presented fairly in order to gain a true picture of students’ skills.
17. Across all forms, a balance of gender and active/passive roles by gender is maintained.
18. Forms attempt to represent the ethnic diversity of Oklahoma students.
19. No resource materials or calculators may be used by students during the test.
20. The stimuli avoid subject matter that might prompt emotional distress on the part of the students.
21. In addition to the 50 operational items, there are 10 field-test items per form.
22. Permission to use stimuli from copyrighted material is obtained as necessary by Educational Testing Service.

5. CONSIDERATIONS SPECIFIC TO THE READING TEST

Each fifth-grade level passage contains identifiable key concepts with relevant supporting details. Each passage is appropriate for determining the purpose for reading; analyzing character traits; compare/contrast; problem/solution; interpretation; application; analysis; synthesis; drawing conclusions; making an inference; being conducive for vocabulary analogies; and other relevant reading tasks as defined by the *Priority Academic Student Skills* for fifth-grade reading.

The passages is well-written and have a variety of sentence types and lengths, which may include dialogue, reflect Oklahoma's cultural diversity, and possess sufficient structural integrity to allow them to be self-contained. Reading passages reflect a balance of genres from narrative to expository texts.

The test form contains at least one set of paired passages that allows students to make comparisons and connections between texts.

All passages are reviewed to eliminate cultural or other forms of bias that might disadvantage any group(s) of students. The passages avoid subject matter that might prompt emotional distress.

Permission to use selections from copyrighted material is obtained as necessary by Educational Testing Service.

The majority of the selections used for the Reading Test includes authentic literature; a minor portion may be selected from commissioned works. The reading test form includes five to six authentic literary selections of 300 to 600 words, and five to six expository selections, one of which will be task-oriented. Each passage generates four to ten multiple-choice questions from various *PASS* standards, including vocabulary meaning, meanings of foreign words, and use of word-meaning resources in addition to context. The questions are at application, analysis, and evaluation levels of critical thinking/problem solving. Questions also include word meaning, literal, paraphrase, and interpretative, and summative comprehension tasks.

1. All question stems and answer options are commensurate to the reading demands of the accompanying passage. All questions address issues of importance and are consequential, concise, focused, and fair.
2. Test items are drawn from the passage in such a way that a student's previous knowledge does not impact his or her response. Test items focus on reading skills and comprehension strategies, avoiding measurement of a student's feelings or values.
3. In a paired passage, the items that require comparisons and connections between the passages appear after both passages. There is a minimum of three questions for the related paired passages in addition to three to five separate questions for each passage in the pair.

4. The distractors adopt the language and sense of the material in the selection. The distractors are designed to encourage students to think their way to the correct answer rather than simply identify incorrect responses by virtue of a distractor's obviously inappropriate nature.
5. No question stem or answer option provides clues to any other item's answer, nor is the same fact of the passage assessed more than once, including the same vocabulary or technical term.
6. Test items focus on reading skills and comprehension strategies and avoid measurement of a student's attitudes, values, and feelings.

Item Types

Each multiple-choice item has four responses—the correct answer and three distractors. Distractors are developed based on the types of errors students are most likely to make.

For Item-Review Committee purposes, information regarding the *PASS* standard(s) and objectives addressed, item format, Depth of Knowledge, and correct answer key accompany each item.

Each item begins with a stem that asks a question or poses a clear problem. Stems may include incomplete sentences in order to reduce unnecessary repetition of text.

Most stems are positively worded—avoiding the use of the word not. If a negative is required, the format is “All of the following ... except.”

A stimulus that gives information must precede a question or a set of questions.

Vocabulary

The vocabulary words tested in Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests come directly from the passage content. Words used for vocabulary items have sufficient surrounding context clues for the reader to determine the meaning. Students may encounter words in the text that are not tested, but are above the student's grade placement. In Grades 3-5, these challenging words and their definitions may be placed in a word box above the story or article. In Grades 6-8, the definitions of challenging words may be placed in footnotes.

No single source is available to determine the reading level of various words. Therefore, the appropriateness and difficulty of a word is determined in various ways. Vocabulary words are checked in the following: *EDL Core Vocabularies in Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies*; *Basic Reading Vocabularies*; the *Living Word*; or other reliable readability sources. In addition to using the aforementioned printed resources to assist in creating vocabulary items, each vocabulary item must be approved by Oklahoma's Content Review Committee. The committee, comprised of Oklahoma educators from across the state, reviews proposed vocabulary items for grade level appropriateness.

Stimulus Materials

Stimulus materials are the passages, graphs, models, figures, etc. that students must read and examine in order to respond to items. The following characteristics are necessary for stimulus materials:

1. When students are given information to evaluate, they should know the research question and the purpose of the research.
2. Passages, graphics, tables, etc., provide sufficient information for assessment of multiple standards.
3. Stimulus materials for a set of items may be a combination of multiple stimuli.
4. Information in stimulus materials is representative of what students would encounter in or beyond school.
5. For conceptual items, stimulus materials are necessary but not conceptually sufficient for student response.
6. There is a balance of graphic and textual stimulus materials within a test form. At least 50% of the items have appropriate pictorial and graphical representations. Graphs, tables, or figures are clearly associated with their intended items. Graphics appear either on the same page as the stimulus or on the facing page.

Readability

The selected reading passages will be at the appropriate grade level. The readability level of all passages is evaluated using three recognized readability formulas. The formulas chosen for each grade vary according to the purpose for which the formula was developed.

Grades 3 and 4 use the following formulas: Powers-Sumner-Kearl, Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, Spache, or any other formula that is deemed appropriate. Grades 5-8 determine the readability level of their passages using the following formulas: Dale-Chall, Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, Smog, or any other formulas considered reliable.

Lexile ratings are other techniques used to evaluate the readability of text. In addition, sentence structure, length, vocabulary, content, visuals, and organization are reviewed when selecting appropriate grade level passages. The teacher panel that reviews the passages provides the final evaluation instrument used to make a decision in regards to the readability of a passage.