ASSESSMENT PREP for COMMON CORE READING

Tips and Practice for the Reading Standards

- Test-Taking Tips
- Instructional Resources
- Practice Assessments
- Literature
- Informational Text
- Paired Passages
- CCSS Matrix

Visit learningspotlibrary.com for FREE activities!
## Common Core State Standards Matrix

### English Language Arts Reading Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units of Study</th>
<th>Reading Literature</th>
<th>Reading Informational Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Resources</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novel</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poem</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memoir</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Article</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper Article</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flyer (Functional Text)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paired Text</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This standard is not applicable to literature.

### Literacy Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units of Study</th>
<th>Literacy in History/ Social Studies</th>
<th>Literacy in Science &amp; Technical Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RH.6-8.1</td>
<td>RH.6-8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memoir</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Article</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper Article</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paired Text</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

©Copyright 2010. National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers. All rights reserved.
Test-Taking Tips

Prepare for Success

During the School Year:

➢ Attend school regularly.
➢ Listen and participate in class.
➢ Ask questions when you don’t understand.
➢ Complete homework assignments.
➢ Learn testing vocabulary.
➢ Practice technology skills for online testing.

Before Taking the Test:

➢ Get plenty of sleep the night before testing.
➢ Eat a healthy breakfast the morning of the test.
➢ Go to the restroom before entering the testing room.
➢ Bring needed supplies to the testing room.
Test-Taking Tips

Keys to Success

➤ Be confident and maintain a positive attitude.

➤ Manage your time wisely.

➤ Read or listen to all directions.

➤ Read each question carefully.

➤ Read all answer choices before choosing one.

➤ Eliminate wrong choices, then choose the best answer.

➤ Use details or evidence to support a written response.

➤ Skip or flag difficult questions and answer them last.

➤ Review your answers.

➤ Make sure you have answered all questions.

➤ Think twice before changing an answer.
Test-Taking Tips

Ten Strategies for Success

1. Preview the reading selection for organizational structures and text features.

2. Read all titles, headings, subheadings, maps, charts, graphs, and diagrams carefully.

3. To help you understand the meaning of the text, create mental pictures of what you are reading.

4. As you read, take notes to help you remember and understand key ideas and details.

5. To help you comprehend difficult text, remember to slow down, re-read, or break the text into small chunks.

6. When determining the theme or central idea of a text, the first sentence, the last sentence, or the title usually provides a clue.

7. When you are trying to figure out a vocabulary word from context, replace the word with each of the answer choices and see which answer makes the most sense.

8. Pay close attention to words or phrases in a question that are underlined or are in bold print.

9. Decide what you think the answer to a question is before reading the choices. Then look in order to see if your answer is there.

10. When a question contains the word best, remember that there is probably more than one possible answer. You need to look for the BEST answer.

Adapted from Preparing Students for Standardized Testing, Grade 6 by Janet P. Sitter. Used with permission of Mark Twain Media, Inc. Publishers.
**Test-Taking Tips**

**Technology Skills Self-Assessment**

**Directions:** Read the “Checklist of Skills for Online Assessments” chart. Place a checkmark beside the skills that you can successfully perform. Practice the remaining skills until you become proficient.

### Checklist of Skills for Online Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I know how to . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>log in to a computer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>access the test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use function buttons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>navigate through the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>play audio/video clips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use the vertical scroll bar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drag and drop text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>highlight text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>select and deselect answers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flag questions for later review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>create and edit responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>submit the test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exit the test.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand what you are reading.

When the text becomes difficult or confusing, remember to slow down, re-read, or break the text into small chunks. Creating a mental picture of what you are reading also helps with comprehension.

Directions: Read the text and answer the sample assessment question.

Text: “Manners” by Patrick Holte (adapted)

The guest at a banquet during the Renaissance enjoyed the food and entertainment immensely, but there were definite rules about etiquette and table manners. Spoons were used for soups and puddings, and knives were used for meat, of which there was always a great deal. However, all else was eaten with hands. Certain fingers were extended while eating specific foods to allow clean fingertips to be ready for the next dish. Many dishes in the Renaissance were designed specifically to be eaten with the hands. Breads, pies, and pastries filled with meat, fish, or fruit were common dishes for this reason. Nevertheless, Renaissance cuisine used plenty of sauces, gravies, stuffings, and cream, so skill was required to eat gracefully. Fingers were washed in bowls of lemon-scented water between courses and at the end of a meal.

Renaissance by Patrick Holte. Used with permission of Mark Twain Media, Inc., Publishers.

Sample Assessment Question

What does the text reveal about life during the Renaissance era?

○ A. Banquets were popular events.
○ B. Eating with your fingers was not encouraged.
○ C. People were expected to follow certain rules when eating.
○ D. Food was a central part of every celebration.
Making Inferences

An **inference** is a conclusion based on reasoning and textual evidence. The reader makes an inference when trying to figure out something the author has not stated explicitly in the text.

**TIP** To make an inference, use clues from the text and what you already know about the topic.

**Directions:** Read the text and answer the sample assessment questions.

**Text:** “Charge It” by Maureen Betz

Buying on credit is not a new idea. It dates back to ancient civilizations. Merchants, using a variety of methods, kept records of debts, or money owed to them, by customers. One method of early recordkeeping was tallying using wooden sticks. Tallymen would notch one side of a stick to record the debt and the other side to record payment.

The world’s first charge card was designed for a man who forgot his wallet and couldn’t pay for his dinner. His business partner, Ralph Schneider, created a Diners Club® card in 1950. The card allowed people to buy on credit.


**Sample Assessment Questions**

**Part A**
Based upon the text, what can the reader infer about credit cards?
- A. Many consumers purchase goods and services using credit cards.
- B. A credit card is a way for merchants to keep records of debts.
- C. A credit card is convenient for consumers who do not carry cash.
- D. The credit card was one of the most valuable inventions for consumers.

**Part B**
Which statement from the text best supports the answer in Part A?
- A. “Buying on credit is not a new idea.”
- B. “One method of early recordkeeping was tallying.”
- C. “Ralph Schneider, created a Diners Club® card.”
- D. “The card allowed people to buy on credit.”
**Textual Evidence**

*Textual evidence* is the information within the text that supports the author’s claim or argument.

**TIP** To identify evidence or supporting details, search the text for facts, reasons, and statements that support the claim of the author.

**Directions:** Read the text and answer the sample assessment question.

**Text: Our Animal Allies in the World War by Earnest Harold Baynes**

The war dogs were the keenest, the most intelligent, the most anxious to help, of all the animals used by the Allies. They were the only four-footed beasts who could be trusted to do a piece of work strictly “on their own.” Each one knew his job and did it, not because he was made to, but because of the love which is the impelling motive for everything a free dog does for a man.

Dogs served in many capacities—as messengers, sentries and patrolmen, and occasionally as combatants; as draught animals with the machine guns, in the transport and in the mail service, and as pack animals to carry food and ammunition to points difficult or impossible for other animals to reach. As detectives they were valuable assistants, and as watchmen they were easily superior to men. Not the least important of their many services to the Allies they rendered as “mascots” to the troops. By their merry pranks and the keen interest they showed in everything that was going on: by their readiness to respond to every kind word and to every friendly act: by their courage, loyalty, and everlasting good nature—they helped to relieve the feverish strain of war and to keep up the morale of the men in the trenches.

Public Domain

**Sample Assessment Question**

Read the excerpt from the text and the directions that follow.

The war dogs were the keenest, the most intelligent, the most anxious to help, of all the animals used by the Allies.

Highlight one detail in the text that supports the claim.
Theme

The theme is the main message or moral of a story or poem. Some common themes are freedom, survival, friendship, and patriotism.

TIP To help determine the theme of a text, you must identify its main idea.

Directions: Read the text and answer the sample assessment questions.

Text: “Windy Nights” by Robert Louis Stevenson

Whenever the moon and stars are set,
Whenever the wind is high,
All night long in the dark and wet,
A man goes riding by.
Late in the night when the fires are out,
Why does he gallop and gallop about?

Whenever the trees are crying aloud,
And ships are tossed at sea,
By, on the highway, low and loud,
By at the gallop goes he.
By at the gallop he goes, and then
By he comes back at the gallop again.

Sample Assessment Questions

Part A
Which statement best reflects the theme of the poem?
- A. Stormy weather can cover up mysterious events.
- B. Ships should not be out at sea in stormy weather.
- C. Windy nights are a good time to stay inside.
- D. Windy nights are a good time to go horseback riding.

Part B
Highlight the two lines of the poem that provide evidence to support the answer in Part A.
Central Idea

The central idea is the most important idea of a text. Nonfiction works may contain multiple central ideas.

The central or main idea is often revealed by the title or in the first or last sentences of the text. Other times, it is revealed through the key details in the text.

Directions: Read the text and answer the sample assessment questions.

Text: "Article VI" by Mark A. Strange

In Article VI, the founding fathers established the Constitution as the "supreme law of the land." The Constitution is the highest, most important, document in the United States. No state, county, or city laws will be superior to the Constitution. It is the job of the judicial branch to see that no laws in the country are in conflict with the Constitution. For example, if Indiana passed a law making it possible for Indiana to print its own money, that law would be void, or unenforceable, because the Constitution says that only the Congress can print or coin money. Article VI also states that officials of the United States government must promise to support the Constitution.

Understanding the U.S. Constitution by Mark A. Strange. Used with permission of Mark Twain Media, Inc., Publishers.

Sample Assessment Questions

Part A
Which statement best reflects the central idea?
- A. Article VI is the most important section of the Constitution.
- B. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land.
- C. Only Congress can print money.
- D. Officials of the government must support the Constitution.

Part B
Highlight one detail in the text that supports the answer in Part A.
Summary

A summary contains the key points of a text. It should not include the writer’s personal feelings, opinions, or prior knowledge of the subject.

**TIP** A summary is usually three or four sentences that include the central idea of a text with supporting details.

**Directions:** Read the text and answer the sample assessment question.

**Text:** “Soil” by Barbara R. Sandall

Soil is a valuable natural resource. All life on Earth depends on the soil. Plants are rooted in the soil and obtain nutrients from it for growth. Animals eat plants or other animals that eat plants.

There are many different types of soil, and each one has unique characteristics. Most soils contain four basic components: mineral particles, water, air, and organic matter that comes from decaying, dead plants and animals. The kinds of soils in an area help determine how well crops grow there. Soil can be acid, alkaline, or neutral. Highly acidic or alkaline soils can harm many plants.

The term pH refers to the acidity or alkalinity of a substance. The pH scale ranges from 0 to 14. Testing the soil using a pH-testing kit can determine its condition (pH of 1 to 6 is acidic; pH 7 is neutral; and pH of 8 to 14 is alkaline). Most plants grow best within a pH range of 6.5 to 7.2. Changing the pH of a soil is frequently required to grow healthy plants.

*Chemistry: Chemical and Physical Changes in Matter* by Barbara R. Sandall. Used with permission of Mark Twain Media, Inc., Publishers

**Sample Assessment Question**

Which statement from the text should be included in a summary?

- A. “Most soils contain four basic components:…”
- B. “There are many different types of soil, and each one has unique characteristics.”
- C. “Soil can be acid, alkaline, or neutral.”
- D. “The term pH refers to the acidity or alkalinity of a substance.”
Word Meaning

As you read, you may encounter unfamiliar words.

Use context clues to help you determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word. The context is the other words, phrases, and sentences that surround the unfamiliar word.

Directions: Read the text and answer the sample assessment questions.

Text: "John Steinbeck" (adapted)

Born in Salinas, California, in 1902, John Steinbeck based many of his stories on this area in northern California. He worked in a variety of occupations, such as painter, hod carrier, ranch hand, and fruit-picker, before eventually becoming a reporter.

Steinbeck was the recipient of the Pulitzer Prize in 1940 for his epic novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. In 1962, he won the Nobel Prize for literature. He is probably most famous for *The Grapes of Wrath*, a novel about the migration of people from Oklahoma to California during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Most of Steinbeck’s novels are based on the themes of poverty, hard luck, and tragedy.


Sample Assessment Questions

Part A
What does the word migration mean as it is used in the text?
- A. having many different jobs
- B. receiver of an award
- C. moving from one area to another
- D. writer of novels

Part B
Which phrase from the text helps the reader understand the meaning of migration?
- A. “worked in a variety of occupations”
- B. “most famous for *The Grapes of Wrath***”
- C. “from Oklahoma to California during the Great Depression”
- D. “novels are based on the themes of poverty, hard luck, and tragedy”
Tone

Tone is how an author feels toward the topic or subject of the text. Authors create tone by using words with positive or negative connotations. They also use figurative language, such as similes, metaphors, and personification. Examples of words that describe tone are cheery, angry, amused, and sad.

TIP Look closely at the author’s choice of words. Identify the connotation of words and search for examples of figurative language.

Directions: Read the text and answer the sample assessment questions.

Text: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain

When they reached the haunted house there was something so weird and grisly about the dead silence that reigned there under the baking sun, and something so depressing about the loneliness and desolation of the place, that they were afraid, for a moment, to venture in. Then they crept to the door and took a trembling peep. They saw a weed grown, floorless room, unplastered, an ancient fireplace, vacant windows, a ruinous staircase; and here, there, and everywhere hung ragged and abandoned cobwebs. They presently entered, softly, with quickened pulses, talking in whispers, ears alert to catch the slightest sound, and muscles tense and ready for instant retreat.

Sample Assessment Questions

Part A
Which word best describes the tone of the passage?

- A. serious
- B. lonely
- C. curious
- D. suspenseful

Part B
Which words or phrases from the text support the answer in Part A?

Write your answer in the box.