

New Jersey ASK English Language Arts Review Grades 7-8



The NJASK is a “high stakes exam” administered statewide in April and May to 7th and 8th graders. It is designed to test our students’ proficiencies in Mathematics and English Language Arts. A score of 200 in each section is needed to be considered Proficient (Passing!)

**The English Language Arts (ELA) Section
of the NJASK is divided into two cluster
areas:**

CLUSTER 1: THE WRITING SECTION

CLUSTER 2: THE READING SECTION

**Each of these clusters reflects knowledge
and skills specified in New Jersey's
Core Curriculum Content Standards.**

GENERAL NJASK STRATEGIES:

- The Writing Section:

- Prewrite

- Use “prior knowledge” when brainstorming examples.

- Use believable examples.

- Write a lot (but don't write “junk”).

- Save time for proofreading your essay for grammar and mechanics.

- Be sure to write a conclusion to your essay.

- The Reading Section:

- Just because it's true, doesn't mean it's the right answer. It has to be the *best* answer. Read all choices carefully.

- Use POE (Process of Elimination) and be sure you can explain (for yourself) why wrong answers are wrong.

- When answering questions, go back into the text and write the number of the question you're answering next to the paragraph where it is addressed. Read the paragraph and use the context in answering the question.

- Be sure to answer each open-ended question.

CLUSTER 1: THE WRITING SECTION



WHAT IS GOOD WRITING?



GOOD CONTENT:

- It is clear what the paper is about? (Content)
- Has the writer included details that illustrate and explain the main idea?
- Are the details specific, believable, and convincing?
- Does the writer use good examples that help you see what is happening or what has happened? (Elaboration)

GOOD ORGANIZATION:

- Is there a clear beginning, middle, and ending?
- Are ideas and sentences connected, or do they seem to have no real relationship?
- Are the ideas grouped into paragraphs?
- Does the writer stick to the topic, or does he/she wander all over the place?

GOOD SENTENCE STRUCTURE AND WORD CHOICE:

- Are the sentences varied—some short and some long? (Simple, compound, complex, compound-complex sentences)
- Are the words the writer has chosen varied and interesting? (Vocabulary)
- Does the writer paint vivid pictures with his/her words? (Figurative language)

GRAMMAR AND MECHANICS:

(Is your writing correct in addition to being well-developed and well-organized?)

- I. **Usage**
- B. Tense Formation
- C. Subject-Verb Agreement
- D. Pronouns (Usage/Agreement)
- E. Word choice/Meaning (Use “specific” words —i.e. “nice” is vague)
- F. Proper Modifiers (more/-er; most/-est)

GRAMMAR AND MECHANICS:

(Is your writing correct in addition to being well-developed and well-organized?)

II. Sentence Construction

- A. Variety of Formations (Simple, compound, and complex sentences)
- B. Correct Construction (Avoid fragments and run-ons)
- C. Vary your sentence beginnings (Begin with prepositions, adverbs, adjectives, etc.)

GRAMMAR AND MECHANICS:

(Is your writing correct in addition to being well-developed and well-organized?)

III. Punctuation

- A. End punctuation (Period, Question Mark, Exclamation Point)
- B. Commas
- C. Apostrophes

IV. Correct Spelling

HOW YOUR ESSAY IS SCORED:

- In Holistic Scoring, the “reader/scorer” takes approximately **2-minutes** to read your essay.
- The scorer uses the “New Jersey Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric”
- Approximately 2/3’s of your grade is based on “What you say”: Content, Organization, Sentence Structure, and word choice; 1/3 of your score is based on Grammar and Mechanics

How to Obtain the Highest Score in the Writing Section

- **To score a “6”, the highest score, your paper must “contain” the following:**
 - Opening and closing
 - Single, distinct focus
 - Unified and coherent
 - Well-developed
 - Logical progression of ideas** (Develop the main idea with supporting material divided into logical sections)
 - Fluent, cohesive** (Use “transition words” to make writing smooth)
 - Effective, vivid, explicit, and pertinent details**
 - Successful compositional risks**
 - Correct Usage, Sentence Construction, and Mechanics**

COMPOSITIONAL RISKS

(Use these techniques to raise your score!)

- Rhetorical Questions
- “Showing not telling”
- The many uses of “said” (i.e. yelled, whispered...)
- The use of “imagery”
- Simile, metaphor, and personification usage to create comparison.
- The use of common, favorite, or famous quotes related to the topic.
- The “extended metaphor” approach.
- The use of dialogue in moderation.
- The use of sentence variety.
- The inclusion of personal anecdotes or examples related to the topic.
- The use of academic vocabulary. (Add 2/3 “expensive” academic words)
- The use of appropriate humor and/or irony.

WRITING PART 1:

The Persuasive/Argument Task

Time : 45 Minutes



Writing Task:

Students will write in response to a current controversy related to an interpersonal, school/community, or societal issue.

This piece of writing may be required to be in the form of a letter, a formal essay, an editorial, or a speech.

Types of Persuasive Writing Prompts:

- Interpersonal controversies- when two or more individuals disagree about choices, decisions, behaviors, or ideas. Example: You and a friend are arguing about whether or not to attend a party this weekend.
- School/Community controversies- when two or more groups of people disagree about rules, behaviors, procedures, conditions, or ideas. Example: Proposition of including a HSPA Class as a requirement for all students.
- Societal controversies- when people disagree about laws, conditions, and ideas. Example: Mandatory curfew for teenagers.

Prewriting is the Key!

- The key to writing a persuasive essay that is well focused, well organized, and well explained is to set aside time to prewrite and to utilize the space provided for prewriting.
- Unfortunately, many students do not take time to properly prewrite.
- Students who just jump right in and start writing their essays can't possibly have planned out their essays.
- On the NJ ASK, you will be given a whole page of prewriting space. This is your space to use and plan. It is not graded; however, using the space wisely will lead to writing a strong essay. (However, don't spend more than 5 to 7 minutes on prewriting.)

Persuasive Essay Prewriting Plan:

- Read the “Directions For Writing” and figure out what MODE (format- for example, a letter) you should be writing in. Then decide on a position- you should choose whichever will be easier to write about, even if you do not necessarily agree with it.
- Complete a T-chart. (Think about both sides of the issue. But you will only write about one side of the issue in your essay.)
- Complete a TAP Chart:

My Writing Task: I need to write a (task) to (audience) which will state (purpose).

T=Type of writing needed? (essay; letter; speech)

A=Audience

P=Purpose (Why are you writing the essay? State the pro [for] and con [against] sides of the issue.)

Example: I need to write a letter to my principal which will state whether or not I support the practice of randomly spot-checking backpacks and lockers.

- Write your introduction.
- Write three body paragraphs.
- Write your conclusion.



Practice Persuasive Essay Topic

Recently, a student in your school was suspended for carrying a knife in his backpack. The knife was discovered when he left the back pocket open during class and a teacher saw it sticking out of the bag. As a result of the event, your school's administration is considering doing spot checks of backpacks and lockers periodically. They believe that these spot checks will ensure school safety. Write a letter to your principal explaining why you do or do not support the practice of randomly spot-checking backpacks and lockers. Give clear reasons for your support or criticism of this possible school policy. Make sure to develop each of your reasons fully and completely. You have 45 minutes to complete this essay.

PROS- for random spot-checking

- can find dangerous objects
- will make everyone in the school feel safer
- will help administration and teachers to have better control of the school

CONS- against random spot-checking

- Invasion of privacy
- Causes profiling
- No benefit of the doubt

NOW, CHOOSE THE STRONGER SIDE OF THE ARGUMENT BASED ON THE PROS AND CONS THAT YOU GENERATED.

THEN, CHOOSE THE THREE BEST EXAMPLES. EACH EXAMPLE WILL BE A BODY PARAGRAPH FOR YOUR ESSAY.

NOW, YOU ARE READY TO PLAN YOUR ESSAY

PERSUASIVE ESSAY ORGANIZER

- **Paragraph 1: Explain why you are writing.**
 - **Attention-grabbing beginning** (i.e. Historical review —something in “news” related to topic; Short-story from your life; Surprising Statement—attention getting/shocking; Famous person—what do celebrities/experts say?)
 - **Description of issue/policy being proposed** (Clearly describe the proposal in your own words; give vivid, specific details!)
 - **Your Opinion Statement** (Clearly states your position for/against the topic)

PERSUASIVE ESSAY ORGANIZER

- **Paragraphs #2, #3, and #4: Explain one reason in each paragraph why you support or oppose the policy.**
- **Each paragraph should include...**
 - Topic sentence** for Reasons #1,#2, and #3 (States the main idea of the paragraph)
 - Evidence** to support your topic sentence
(Evidence should give concrete details with appropriate elaboration—show what you mean with examples)
 - End each paragraph with **personal commentary** (Give YOUR analysis, interpretation, reaction, and thoughts)

Transition Words...Used to “steer your readers” (Definitely get you extra points):

- For example
- Not only/but also
- Most important
- For example
- On the other hand
- Likewise
- In addition
- Therefore
- First
- Next
- Finally
- However
- Another
- In spite of
- Similarly
- As a result
- For this reason
- Since

PERSUASIVE ESSAY ORGANIZER

- **Concluding Paragraph:**
 - Restate your opinion/thesis statement
 - Summarize your 3 reasons
 - Call to action/closing statement (Why is it important that the reader agree? What could happen if your reasons aren't adopted?)

Writing Part 2: Expository/Explanatory Writing

TIME:



Expository Prompt – Essay Based on a Quote



Task: Students will read a quote, adage or universally accessible topic and respond in an educated, thought-provoking essay.



“To be or not to be...”



“Early to bed, early to rise...”



“Harder, better
faster, stronger...”

Types of Prompts:

- **Quotes-** famous quotations by historians, authors, politicians, etc. Example: “Do not be too timid and squeamish about your actions. All life is an experiment.”
- **Adages-** short, memorable sayings that have great meaning attached. Example: Life is ten percent what happens to you and ninety percent how you react to it.
- **Universally Accessible Topic-** Food for thought that is not attached to curriculum or studies, but rather an idea formed from life experience. Example: Some say that love is the most powerful emotion. Others think love is simply a reaction.

TIPS FOR AN EXPOSITORY ESSAY:

- Aim for a 4-paragraph response (at a minimum) which uses various cohesive devices (think- transitions!).
- Remember that this is all expository (explanatory) not narrative (telling a story).
- You will need: an opening and a closing; a well-developed, cohesive, single focus; organization and logical progression.
- You will also need at least two well-developed examples, using vivid details, that directly relate to the prompt.

Introduction:

- Grab the reader's attention (Use persuasive essay techniques)
- Integrate the quote, adage or topic (Explain what the quote means to you)
- Find background information to introduce the topic
- Thesis statement or main idea

Body Paragraph (Your own experience):

- Example(s) from your own experience or observation.
- You will write this as an explanation, not a narration.
- Do not be tempted to relive the story; speak about it with an academic voice.

Body Paragraph (Universal):

- Example(s) from literature, history, science, film, and current events.
- You can actually study for this part, because themes are UNIVERSAL.
- Think about some major novels that you have read thus far and/or some historical figures. Figure out what they stand for, what themes they exemplify, and be ready to work that into whatever prompt presents itself.

Conclusion:

- Generate final remarks without introducing brand new examples
- Unify and summarize your ideas
- Remind the audience of your main point/thesis
- Use a satisfactory closer/clincher (could tie back into intro.)

Expository Essay Based on a QUOTE:

Directions: As part of a language arts class assignment, you have been asked to consider how the following quotation is related to you.

“If you find a path with no obstacles, it probably doesn’t lead anywhere.” -

Anonymous

Write an essay explaining what this quotation means to you. Use details and examples in your essay.

Prewriting: Brainstorming (“Thinking on Paper”)

Initial list of ideas:

- Albert Einstein believed to have suffered from cognitive delays when younger.
- Bill Gates (second richest man in world) was bullied as a child.
- Problems I had while in grammar school.
- Wealthy people take success for granted.
- Singers and movie stars often face obstacles.

Writing Part 3: The Narrative Task



NARRATIVE ESSAY TASK:

- Narrative writing is when you speculate/tell a story. The story you write on the NJ ASK may be true or fictional.
- Student will have 30 minutes to write their narrative story.
- As students plan for their writing, they should describe a clear setting, develop characters with vivid personality traits, and unfold a plot that includes a story problem, rising action, climax, and concludes with a solution.

TIPS FOR THE NARRATIVE PROMPT

1. Speculate means “to guess.” Use your imagination and experiences to tell a story or describe what is happening.
2. Organize essay into a **three-part** story: a beginning, middle and end or a before, during and after. Write a lot!
3. Write about mood, people, objects, events, messages revealed using precise words.
4. Try to relate the prompt to any story, novel, television show, or movie you have seen.
5. Revise and edit your story using the Writer’s Checklist.
6. Use **dialogue** within your story and end with a **theme!**

SEVEN “GOLDEN RULES” FOR A SUCCESSFUL NARRATIVE PROMPT

1. You need to **tell a STORY**--with a beginning, middle, and end. **Don't just describe. The directions are really asking for a story!**
2. Don't worry about telling the **CORRECT** story. There is no correct story—and there is always more than one story buried in the prompt. You will not be wrong as long as your story is reasonable and connected to the prompt.
3. Try to create **suspense** in your story.
3. Tell the events of the story in a **clear sequence**.
4. To keep things interesting, add a **plot complication**—something else that has to be solved or overcome. After all, no action-adventure movie worth its summer success has only one plot complication.
5. **Dialogue** shows what the characters are thinking and doing.
6. The story shouldn't just stop. Give the reader a chance to see how the characters think and feel after the main action is complete. A **clear ending** helps by showing the significance of the event. Think of it as the **theme or point of the story**.

COMPOSITIONAL RISKS

(Use these techniques to raise your score!)

- “Showing not telling”
- The many uses of “said” (i.e. yelled, whispered...)
- The use of “imagery”
- Simile, metaphor, and personification usage to create comparison.
- The use of common, favorite, or famous quotes related to the topic.
- The “extended metaphor” approach.
- The use of dialogue in moderation.
- The use of sentence variety.
- Personal anecdotes or examples related to the topic.
- The use of extensive vocabulary. (Add 2/3 “big” words)
- The use of appropriate humor and/or irony.

NJ ASK—Narrative Prompt

A word prompt will sound something like this:

You are walking home from school and notice there is a paper bag on the sidewalk. When you look into the bag you discover a large sum of money. You walk home daydreaming about the new video game system you will buy for yourself. At home you further inspect the bag and discover a bank deposit slip with the name Mrs. Sara Horton. Write a story about what happens next, including a problem and a solution.

Beginning	Middle	End
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•walking home from school•main character (me) is thinking about a bad grade on a math test•main character stumbles upon a bag with money in it daydreaming about	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•internal conflict—me vs. the guilt of possibly keeping the money to buy a Wii for myself•me, sitting on my bed debating what to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•the next morning, the main character is home and Google's the name of the owner of the missing property•returns the bag of money without taking a reward

Story Map for the Narrative Prompt:

What is the story?

Who is the main character? Myself (the narrator)

Details about the main character: Upset because of bad grades I school.

Hypothesis/questions about the main character: How is she going to get her Wii?

Where is the action happening? Walking home from school.

Details about the place: Finds a bag with money in it.

Hypothesis about the place: How did the money get there?

Main action? Me, sitting on my bed debating what to do.

What does the action show? Internal conflict—me vs. the guilt of possibly keeping the money to buy a Wii for myself.

Hypothesis about the action: Decides it is better to return the bag of money.

Writing a “Great” Beginning:

The beginning of your story should be interesting, so that the reader will want to keep reading. Here are some ideas. *Make sure the beginning is appropriate for the story.*

1. Make a creepy statement: An eerie chill filled the room, drifting like a silent ghost.
2. Describe the location of your subject: Out behind the shed was an old rusty, wrecked Ford truck.
3. Describe what someone was doing: Mrs. Johnson was shouting at me!
4. Begin with a question: When did you first notice he was missing, Mrs. Green?
5. Take readers back into the past: When I was a little girl, I loved to visit Grandpa.
6. Use foreshadowing: If James had only known what he was getting into.
7. Begin with a sound: Clunk. Clunk. Clunk.
8. Describe the weather: Rain spattered against the windows.
9. Begin with a thought: I always thought I would grow up to be a doctor.
10. Begin with an exclamation: “Watch out, Kate!”
11. Describe your setting: West Ninth Street was quiet that day.
12. Pinpoint a specific time: The tragedy occurred on December 11th at 4:00 PM.
13. Begin with a startling statement: I had no intention of losing my little brother that day; it just sort of happened.
14. Begin with a tense situation: We had been trying to find our way out of the jungle for days.
15. Begin with a smell: The kitchen was filled with the sweet aroma of chocolate chip cookies.
16. Begin with an emotion: Brian had an unpleasant feeling about the test that day.

“Great Beginnings and Endings”

Ways to Begin a Composition

- A compelling or surprising fact
- A thought-provoking question
- An interesting quotation
- A vivid description of an event
- A sentence that states the main idea or topic
- An opinion
- A statement addressed directly to the reader

Ways to End a Composition

- Summarize or restate the main idea
- Address the reader directly
- Make a prediction or comment on the future
- Express an opinion
- Express a thought, feeling, or statement related to the main idea
- Leave the reader wondering about an unanswered question

Writing Part 4: Argument Writing



Argument/Opinion

- Used for many purposes
 - To change the reader's point of view
 - To bring about some action on the reader's part
 - To ask the reader to accept the writer's explanation or evaluation of a concept, issue or problem
- An argument is a reasoned, logical way of demonstrating that the writer's position, belief, or conclusion is

General Characteristics: Argument Writing

- Thesis states a narrowed and defined argument
- Is text- and research-based
- Evidence to support reasoning and position is clearly and accurately written
- Refutes opposing arguments
- Has a conclusion
- Restates premise and summarizes

Argument vs. Persuasion

- When writing to persuade, writers employ a variety of persuasive strategies
 - Appeals to the credibility, character, or authority of the writer (or speaker)—when writers establish that they are knowledgeable and trustworthy, audiences are more likely to believe what they say
 - Appeals to the audience's self-interest, sense of identity, or emotions, any of which can sway an audience

Argument vs. Persuasion

- A logical argument, on the other hand, convinces the audience because of perceived merit and reasonableness of the claims and proofs offered rather than either the emotions the writing evokes in the audience or the character or credentials of the writer
- The common core standards place special emphasis on writing logical arguments as a particularly important form of college- and career-ready writing
- In summation, persuasive writing is not as rigorous because it allows students to write solely based on their experiences and emotions, without having to gather evidence and facts or consider the other side.

The *Argument* Essay Checklist (✓)

Remember.....The argumentative essay, while similar to the persuasive essay, also has a few differences; most importantly, the argumentative essay uses evidence to both show one's own position and to refute the opposing argument.

- ✓ Start by introducing the topic and state or explain your position.
- ✓ Then, write 3 paragraphs to state each of your supporting points, following your statements with the evidence and examples that prove or support your points.
- ✓ Next, be sure to write one paragraph with an opposing view and evidence that supports the objections. Be sure to write a rebuttal to the opposing claim explaining why the opposing point is wrong.
- ✓ Finally, write a conclusion that restates your claim or position; include a summary of supporting points, and an assessment of rebuttals.

Remember.....

- The argument essay, while similar to the **persuasive** essay, also has a few important differences:

The Argument Essay

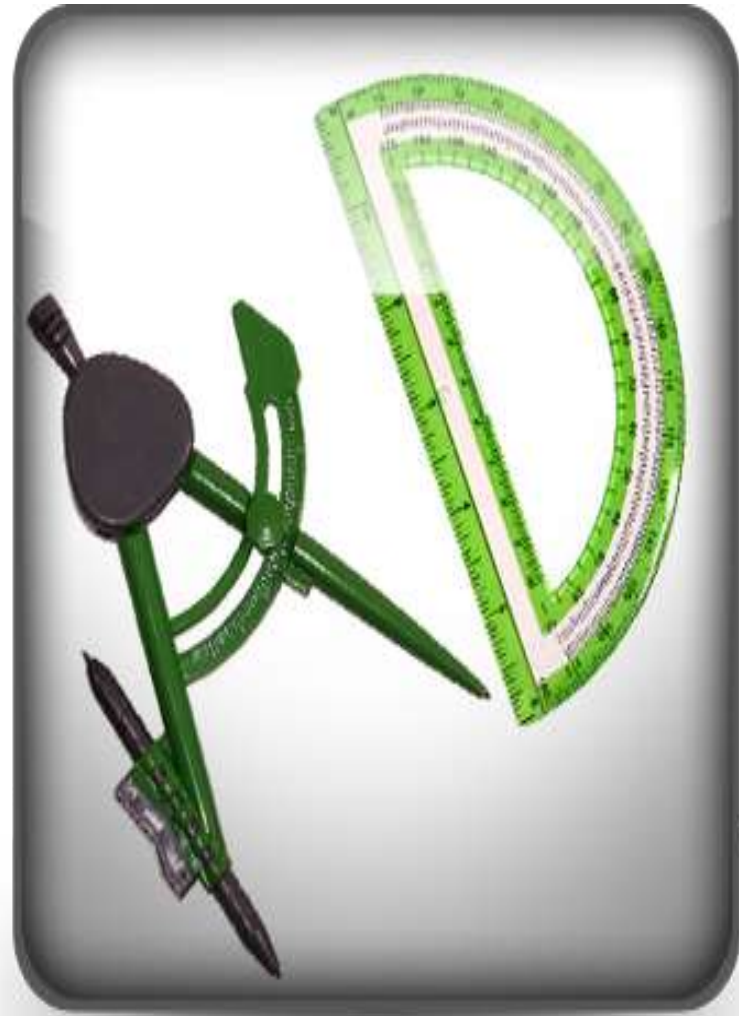
- **Most importantly, the argumentative essay uses evidence to both show one's own position and to refute the opposing argument.**



The Beginning

Start by introducing the topic and state or explain your position.

Then, write 3 paragraphs to state each of your supporting points, following your statements with the evidence and examples that prove or support your points.



Next, be sure to write one paragraph with an opposing view and evidence that supports the objections. Be sure to write a rebuttal to the opposing claim explaining why the opposing point is wrong.



In Conclusion:

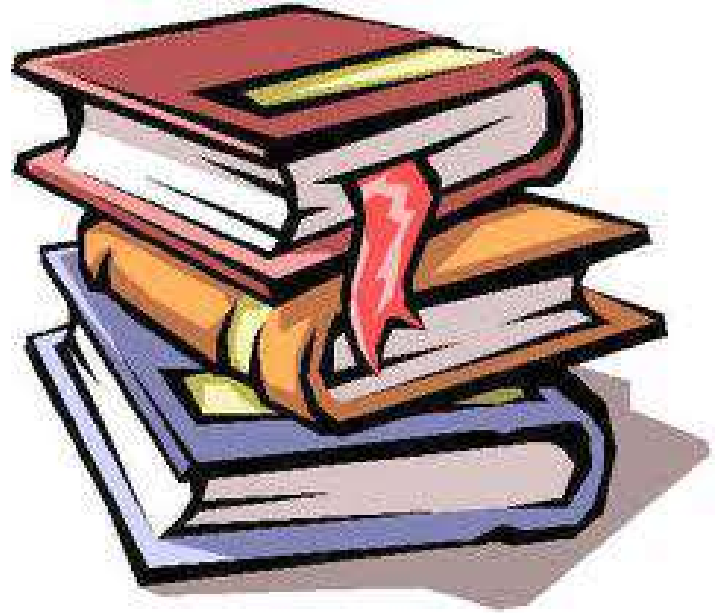
Restate your claim or position; include a summary of supporting points, and an assessment of rebuttals.

CLUSTER 2: THE READING SECTION



Part 5: Narrative Reading

TIME:
30 MINUTES



What is a Narrative Text?

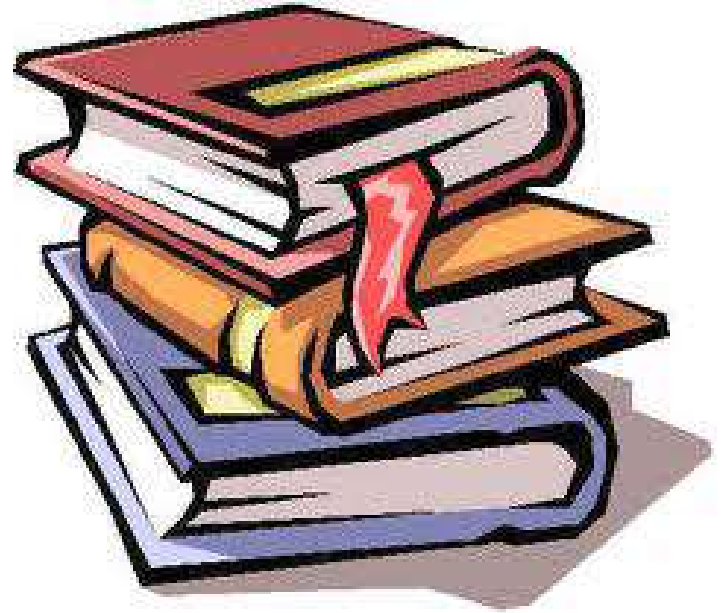
Task:

Read a story (approximately 4 pages) and answer 10 multiple choice questions and 2 open-ended questions.

A NARRATIVE TEXT is written primarily to tell a story. This story will establish or develop a conflict and address common aspects of human existence. Because appropriate literature may contain unsettling or disturbing issues or events, text selected for the assessment will provide a positive resolution and affirm the dignity of the human spirit.

Part 6: Informational Text

TIME:
30 MINUTES



What is a Informational Text?

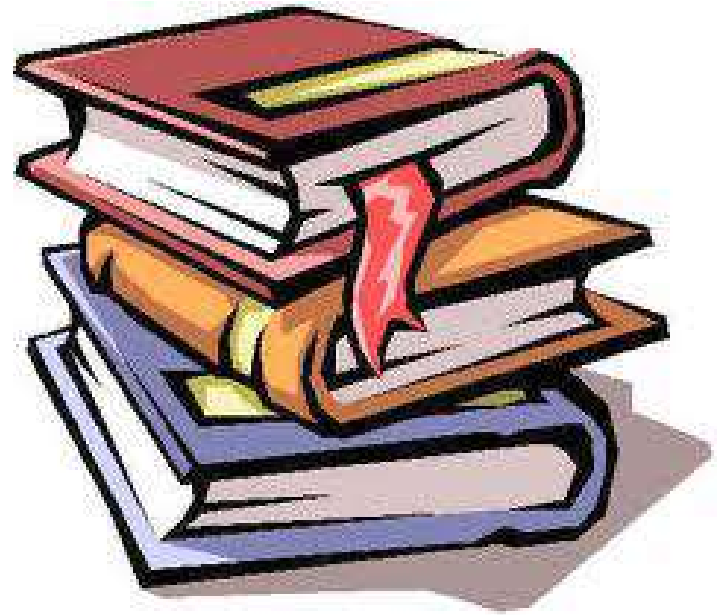
Task:

Read a story (approximately 4 pages) and answer 10 multiple choice questions and 2 open-ended questions.

An **INFORMATIONAL TEXT** is written primarily to explain. This writing is found in textbooks, newspapers, and magazines. It includes a central idea developed by major points and supporting details. Headings and subheadings break up some informational texts. Sometimes visual aids such as charts and graphs are included to help explain the written information.

Part 7: Persuasive Text

TIME:
30 MINUTES



What is a Persuasive Text?

Task:

Read a story (approximately 3 pages) and answer 10 multiple choice questions and 2 open-ended questions.

A PERSUASIVE TEXT is a text in which the writer attempts to sway the reader to a specific point of view. Because persuasive writing is based on a personal vision, it is inherently controversial. Exploring these controversial issues develops and enhances students' critical thinking skills. Persuasive passages are selected from previously published text. Students will respond to open-ended and multiple choice questions about these passages to assess literal and inferential thinking through understanding, analyzing, and assessing texts.

10-10-10 Formula For the Reading Passages:

- **The First 10 minutes:**

- Read the open-ended passage carefully, then annotate the passage based on that question.
- Purpose of annotating: “You are looking for ideas and evidence that will help you answer the open-ended question. So when you see something useful, underline it.”

- **The Second 10 minutes:**

- Answer the multiple-choice questions.
- Why not answer the open-ended response first? Because the multiple-choice will help you review the content of the passage and will help you to develop a clearer understanding of the text.
- Also, the multiple-choice questions count for more points than the open-ended do.

- **The Third 10 minutes:**

- Write your open-ended response paragraph(s).
 1. Restate the question
 2. Answer the question, giving evidence from the text and explaining it.
 3. Provide a punchy insight (theme/message of your answer).
- Remember that you must not only plug in the evidence, but you must provide context for it and explain how it supports your argument.

ACTIVE READING STRATEGIES:

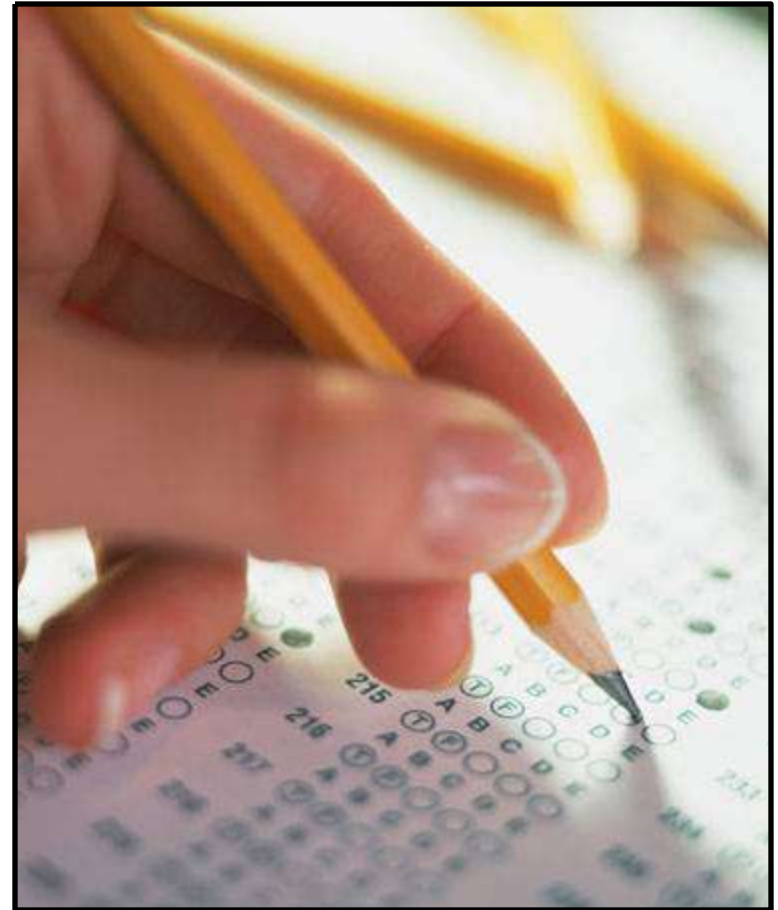
- Get information from the introduction.
- Think about the selection title.
- Skim the questions before you read.
- Read carefully and thoughtfully.
- Pay attention to text features (i.e. bold print) and visual aids.
- Reread and think about difficult parts.
- Consider the author's use of literary elements and techniques.
- Take notes/annotate/underline as you read.

ACTIVE READING MEANS:

- *focusing complete attention on what you read;
- *thinking about an author's ideas and how he or she conveys them; and
- *making note of key points as you read.

Types of Multiple Choice Questions

- recognize a theme or central idea.
- recognize details that develop or support the main idea.
- extrapolate (find) information and/or follow directions.
- paraphrase, retell, interpret phrases / sentences from the text.
- recognize a purpose (inform, explain, inspire, or entertain) for reading.
- make tentative inferences (predictions) of meaning.
- make judgments, form opinions, draw conclusions from the text.
- use context clues to define vocabulary words



Multiple Choice Tips for General Questions:

- Recognize the author's main idea- what is (s)he trying to sell, make you believe, or make you do?
- Understand the author's main points- the arguments supporting the point of view.
- Look for support ideas- usually details that include quotes, anecdotes, details, examples, or statistics.
- Know the author's purpose- look for the action that (s)he wants from the reader.
- Read the question and all answers thoroughly before selecting an answer. Note that many answers will seem plausible, and in some cases several answers will be correct, but one will be the best answer.
- If you aren't sure of the correct answer, try to eliminate incorrect answers.
- For questions that refer to the text, go back and read the whole section of text from which the sample comes.
- Watch out for "concrete" language meant to throw you off (ex- Always, Never, Everyone, Nobody, Must). Look, instead, for "soft" words (ex- Some, Often, May, Many, Sometimes). Soft language is usually used in the correct answer!

Multiple Choice Tips for Vocabulary Questions:

- Put your finger over the word that you are trying to define. Then read the sentence filling in your choices as a replacement. Do any of them read funny? Rule them out!
- Figure out the part of speech: adjective, noun, verb? Then rule out any choices that are of a different part of speech!
- Look at the connotation of the word. Is it positive or negative? Any choices that have a conflicting connotation? Rule them out!
- Look back at the surrounding paragraph and assess the tone. From your remaining choices, can you determine which option best fits the paragraph? If the language is harsh and an answer option seems mild... rule it out!
- Once you complete steps 1-4 you should be left with your BEST option!

Part 8:

Responding to Open-Ended Questions:

- When a question is open-ended, it means that the question has no single specific correct answer.
- Students will respond to the question in different ways.
- Responses are judged by how accurately and how well a student uses information from the reading to defend a position.

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES:

Here are some strategies for success on open-ended responses:

- Restate the question in your response. This creates a familiarity with the text and shows the test graders that you are aware of what is being asked.
- Answer ALL PARTS of the question, writing 4-6 sentences per question. Be sure to answer each bullet in a separate paragraph.
- Provide EVIDENCE from the text. This is crucial! EXPLAIN the evidence. A good transition is to write, “In paragraph ___ the author states...”
- End with a PUNCHY, INSIGHTFUL STATEMENT. This means that you will reflect on the question and answer and offer some insight (i.e. personal anecdote, allusion, or scholastic or global reference. It creates nice closure and offers the grader a chance to see that you think “outside the box.”)

4	<p>— RESTATES the question, using NAMES instead of pronouns.</p> <p>— Answers ALL PARTS of the question, writing <u>4-6 sentences</u> per question part.</p> <p>— Provides an insightful explanation using AMPLE, ACCURATE, AND RELEVANT EVIDENCE from the text and your own ideas to support your argument.</p> <p>— Ends with a PUNCHY STATEMENT/INSIGHT.</p> <p>— Uses effective transitions for smooth flow.</p> <p>— Uses strong vocabulary.</p> <p>— NO ERRORS in mechanics or usage.</p>
3	<p>— RESTATES the question.</p> <p>— Answers ALL PARTS of the question, writing <u>3-4 sentences</u> per question part.</p> <p>— Provides an explanation using ACCURATE, RELEVANT EVIDENCE from the text and your own ideas to support your argument.</p> <p>— Ends with SOME INSIGHT.</p> <p>— Uses transitions.</p> <p>— Uses some strong vocabulary.</p> <p>— FEW ERRORS in mechanics or usage.</p>
2	<p>— May not RESTATE the question.</p> <p>— May not answer ALL PARTS of the question, giving only <u>2-3 sentences</u> per question.</p> <p>— Provides a weak/incoherent explanation using SKIMPY, INACCURATE, OR IRRELEVANT EVIDENCE.</p> <p>— Ending is repetitious/weak.</p> <p>— No transitions, choppy.</p> <p>— Uses weak vocabulary.</p> <p>— MANY ERRORS in mechanics or usage.</p>
1	<p>— Does not RESTATE the question.</p> <p>— Does not answer ALL PARTS of the question, giving <u>0-2 sentences</u> per question.</p> <p>— Fails to provide EVIDENCE from the text or your own ideas to support your argument.</p> <p>— Ending is repetitious/weak/missing.</p> <p>— MANY ERRORS in mechanics or usage.</p>

Model of an Open-Ended Question:

The author of this article identifies challenges and successes that teachers experience every day.

- Identify one challenge experienced by a teacher in the article. How does the teacher overcome it?
- Identify one success achieved by a teacher in the article. How does the teacher achieve it?

Use evidence from the article to support and develop your answer.

This question provides you with a road map for reading the story. As you read, you should focus on challenges and successes.

*One challenge that Mr. Escalante must face is his students' lack of motivation. In the article on the film **Stand and Deliver**, the main character, Jaime Escalante, teaches an advanced-level mathematics class to unmotivated urban students. One reason that the students lack motivation is the fact that no one believes in them. Even when they do succeed, they are considered "mediocre" students because of their past school records.*

Mr. Escalante's students experience remarkable success on their state level mathematical exam scores. As a result of the exceptional excellence reflected in students' exam scores, Mr. Escalante is questioned by the test makers and his administration. People cannot believe that students who had been so mediocre prior to his class might perform so well in such a short period of time. Mr. Escalante must use a variety of unique teaching strategies in order to get his students to achieve higher goals. He also has to look very closely at the factors that keep his students from succeeding and help each of his individual students to believe in himself or herself. The way that Mr. Escalante and his students respond to this injustice illustrates how they have truly learned from their experiences.

**GOOD LUCK ON
THE NEW JERSEY ASK
TEST!!!**



REMEMBER:



DON'T BE NERVOUS

AND

**APPLY WHAT YOU
HAVE LEARNED!!!**