

**New Paltz Central School District
English Language Arts
Grade 3**

Test Taking as a Genre

The Grade 3 ELA Format

Listening

For the listening selection, students listen to a passage and apply skills and knowledge gained in the classroom to answer comprehension questions. The questions are designed to demonstrate students' understanding of passage. The listening section contains a literary passage. Listening passages are carefully selected for grade-level-appropriate vocabulary and content. Students will not see the questions prior to hearing the listening selection. They should be encouraged to take careful notes during the second reading of the listening selection to assist them in answering the questions that follow.

Reading

In the reading section, students read several passages representing a variety of genres. Literary passages may include short stories, folk tales, poetry, or other forms of literary writing. Informational passages may include articles, excerpts from biographies or autobiographies, essays, or other forms of informational writing. Tests at every grade level contain both literary and informational reading passages.

For each passage, students apply the skills and knowledge gained in the classroom by answering reading comprehension questions that demonstrate their understanding of the passages. The reading passages that appear on the tests are similar to the kinds of materials students read both in the classroom and for homework assignments. Reading passages are carefully selected for grade-level-appropriate vocabulary and content.

Writing

The reading/writing section of the test will be composed of four short-response questions and one extended-response question. Students will be required to demonstrate knowledge of three types of writing: narrative, persuasive, and informative. Students will write from a variety of prompts and for many different audiences. Student responses will be evaluated on how well the writing addresses the task and demonstrates understanding of the passages.

Question Formats

The English Language Arts test will contain questions with a variety of formats, including multiple choice, short response (2-credit), extended response (3-credit) and graphic organizers. For multiple-choice questions, students will select the correct

response from four answer choices. For short-and extended- response questions, students will write answers to open-ended questions.

The editing paragraph and extended response will not be used to assess writing mechanics. Instead, multiple-choice questions will be included to assess the students' knowledge of grammar, punctuation, and word usage.

Scoring

Scores for all of the constructed responses are based on evidence of the following qualities:

- *Meaning* - the extent to which the response exhibits sound understanding, interpretation, and analysis of the task and text.
- *Development* - the extent to which ideas are supported through the use of specific, accurate, and relevant evidence from the text.

Scores for the extended response are also based on evidence of the following quality:

- *Organization* - the extent to which the response exhibits direction, shape, and coherence.

The short-response and extended-response questions in the Listening and Reading sections of the test are scored individually with holistic rubrics. The short-response rubric allows for the scoring of meaning and development. In addition, the holistic rubric for the extended-response question in Grade 3 in the Reading section allows for the scoring of organization.

The following chart provides a description of the test design for third grade.

	Time	Passages	Questions	
Book 1	60 minutes	6-7 passages (literary and informational)	35 multiple-choice questions	
Book 2	30 minutes excluding listening	1 listening selection (literary)	5 multiple-choice questions 3 short-response questions 3-5 multiple-choice (writing mechanics questions)	
Book 3	60 minutes	2 passages (not paired)	4 short-response questions 1 extended-response question	
Total	150 minutes	9-10 passages	43-45 multiple-choice questions 7 short-response questions 1 extended-response question	

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Overview of the Lessons

Structure of the Test

- How is it laid out on the page?
- Signs, words, multiple choice format, illustrations, diagrams, charts

Attitude

- What are the requirements of listening?
- How much information can you hold in your mind?
- How to move on to the next passage with a clean slate

Question Comprehension

- The language of the test
- Partnerships study the questions from practice tests and examine words in questions they don't understand
- Identify how to read questions like a scavenger hunt.
- Examine what the author of the test is trying to get from you.
- Focus attention on questions and think about exactly what is being asked.
- Read questions first and take notes by underlining important information in passage or question that helps you identify what to look for.

Structured Responses

- Students will identify important words in passages that help provide evidence to answer questions.
- Answers should have examples of what is in the passage, not what is in students' minds.

Scoring of Responses

- Use rubric to examine the meaning, development, organization, and language use in responses.
- The short-response and extended-response questions in the Listening and Reading sections of the test are scored individually with holistic rubrics.
- The short-response rubric allows for the scoring of meaning and development
- The holistic rubric for the extended-response question in the Reading section allows for the scoring of organization.

Answer-Sheet Skills

- Practice bubbling and moving between test booklet and answer sheet.

Checking Answers

- Help students identify questions that give them personal difficulty.
- Find ways to mark test booklet to help identify specific problem questions and go back to check those instead of going over the entire test.

Additional Resources

Download a variety of tests from:

<http://www.nysedregents.org/Grade3/EnglishLanguageArts/home.html>

Helpful Websites:

<http://www.p12nysed.gov/osa/ei/ela-math-guide-11.pdf>

<http://www.mtsinai.k12.ny.us/elemschool/assessment/grade3/ela3.htm>

<http://www.studyzone.org/testprep/ela3.cfm>

Structure of the Test Lessons

Each day examine a different booklet (Book 1, Book 2, Book 3)

Objective

Students will become familiar with and identify the structure of the test.

Itinerary

Students will look at practice test with partner and notice how it is set up - how it's laid out on the page, signs, words, multiple choice format, illustrations, diagrams, charts.

“Today we’re going to investigate like detectives. We’re looking for clues. You and your partner will examine a test and make note of what you notice. Look at how it’s laid out on the page, signs, words, multiple choice format, illustrations, diagrams, and charts.

“Remember, don’t *do* the test, *study* it. What do you see in it?”

After a few minutes, gather the students together, discuss, chart, and investigate again.

Gather and share out more. At the end of the session share that the clues that were gathered are like clues on a treasure map. Finding the clues helps us understand what the author of the test wants from us.

Possible Extensions

- Create a T chart
- Create a Venn diagram
- How is it not like a book?

Attitude Lessons

Lesson 1

Objective

Students will identify the need to focus attention and to remember as much as possible. Get set for the test. Energize!

Itinerary

“We’ve looked through tests and seen directions, passages, and questions we need to read. In order to get ready to listen we need to get set to turn on our eyes, ears, and minds and listen like a vacuum.

“We need to turn on our engines and listen, scooping up as many details into our minds as we can. It’s different than when we spend a few days with a chapter book getting to know the characters. We need to turn on and vacuum up the facts into our brains in one sitting.”

Show dial-turn it up to energize before listening passage.

“Deep breath in and out; ears, eyes, and mind open; lights on inside.

“Turn on your vacuum and let’s see how many facts we can hold in our mind vacuums. Read through a sample listening section after focusing your minds and bodies to avoid distraction and see how much you personally can remember.”

Lesson 2

Objective

Students will learn techniques to “clean slate” between reading multiple passages.

Itinerary

Partners will go through section with multiple passages.

Discuss strategies to get self ready for new passage, e.g., take a breath, close eyes for a couple of seconds, stretch.

Gather ideas to help students work through the test.

Lesson 3

Objective

Students will identify how many questions they can hold in their mind as they read.

Itinerary

“Imagine your mind is like a bucket and you need to fill it up with as much information as you can while you listen to this story.

“What do you think is important to remember from literary passages such as short stories, folk tales, or poetry?”

Teacher will read a literary selection and students will share what information they put into their mind buckets.

Lesson 4

Objective

Students will identify how to read a question.

Itinerary

Model: “When I read a test question I stop and try to figure out what information the question wants me to get.

“Let’s look at this one together. I stop and say, what is---main concern? Ok, they want me to find out what this guy--- is mainly worried about? Can you see how I tried to figure out what they were asking by trying to say the question in my own words?

“Now you read the question with your partner and together figure out what it’s asking and write down what you decide.”

When finished, gather and identify the different ways students paraphrase the question. Together look at their interpretations. With partners discuss which interpretations would help them and which would lead them astray.

Question Comprehension (The Language of the Test) Lessons

Lesson 1

Objective

Students will identify common questions they are already comfortable with, e.g., who, what, when, where, how, why.

Itinerary

“You all have been in school already for a number of years. Questions are asked all the time. What types of questions do you hear often from your teachers? Parents?

Gather and chart responses.

“Questions on tests ask different types of questions. Over the next few days we will become more familiar with test questions.”

Lesson 2

Objective

Students will identify confusing words in questions and develop a list of comparable phrases or synonyms.

Itinerary

“First we’ll be detectives looking at this question on the Smart board to find any

words or phrases that are confusing. Then you and your partner will examine other questions, looking for words you don't understand."

Together, read and identify words they don't understand. Write words on a T chart. Elicit meanings. Flip back to chart from common five "W" questions they already understand. Are there any that mean the same thing? Write comparable words next to them.

Lesson 3 (continue as necessary)

Objective

Students will examine confusing words in questions.

Itinerary

Students will look at questions from sample tests with a partner.

"Today we will continue examining questions, looking for words that you don't understand."

Add to chart. "How are they alike? How are they different? What other words mean the same thing?" Add to T chart list.

Lesson 4

Objective

Students will determine what the test author wants to know, what they need to look for. (How to read a question like it is a scavenger hunt.)

Itinerary

"Let's read some questions. What key words tell you what the author of the test wants to know?"

"Imagine you are on a scavenger hunt and the test is the map. The question holds the clues to what you are looking for in the passages."

Read questions together and refer back to the chart of question words. Search the passage for them.

Lesson 5

Objective

Students will identify the meanings of common phrases found on the ELA test.

Itinerary

"Let's read some phrases and see what they mean."

Create a T chart with the test phrases below. Write synonyms and/or phrases that mean the same thing.

mostly about
best completes
story elements
one example
in your opinion
most likely
best describes
according to
the article
right before
right after
the information
main purpose
most important

Lesson 6

Objective

Students will learn that reading a question is different than reading a book.

Itinerary

“What do we do when we read a book? Today I want you to notice how that is the same and different than reading a question.”

Model how to read a question. Think aloud your thought process, including self-questioning, e.g., What do I need to know? What do I need to find out? What kind of evidence do I need to look for? Is it a five “W” question?

Lesson 7

Objective

Students will identify how reading a passage is different from reading a book.

Itinerary

“Yesterday we discussed how reading a question is different than reading a book. When we read test passages, that too is different. Listen and see what I do when reading a passage from a test.”

Model reading a passage with different questions in mind, such as What’s the best title? What is this story mostly about? What’s the main idea? What important information can I hold in my mind?

Lesson 8

Objective

Students will examine question types.

Itinerary

Read through multiple choice questions.
Cut them apart and sort them.

“What do you notice? What types of questions are there?”

Study question types. Make a list of questions that were asked.

Sort and find different ways the same question is asked. Refer back to the list of the most commonly used phrases from tests.

Lesson 9

Objective

Students will identify what types of information the questions ask the reader to find.

Itinerary

Read questions first. What do we need to know? Discuss. Underline clues in the question. Read passage with those questions in your mind. Underline the parts that give that important information you are looking for. You could underline who/names, what/problem, where/setting, when/dates.

Structured Response Lessons

Lesson 1

Objective

Students will identify evidence from the text to select answers.

Itinerary

You all have background knowledge/schema, but test makers want to know what details you remember from the passages you read. You have to find your answers from evidence written in the passages in your booklets. Together, read a question from the test. Turn and talk with a partner and identify what the author wants to know from the text. Underline key words in the question and text that support answers.

Lesson 2

Objective

Students will read questions first in order to set a reading goal and underline evidence that answers questions.

Itinerary

We need to read questions like a scavenger hunt to find out what we need to search for as we read.

Together read questions from a past test. Discuss: What do we need to search for as we read the passage? In the margin, note what to look for as you read: who, what, where, when, how. Read the passage and underline the important information that helps you. Answers need to be supported by evidence from the passage.

Lesson 3

Objective

Students will identify what information the questions are asking the reader to find.

Itinerary

Read questions. What do we need to know?

Discuss. Underline. Read the passage with those questions in your mind.

Underline parts that give important information, such as who/names, what/problem, where/setting, when/dates. Answers need to be supported by evidence from the passage.

Lesson 4

Objective

Students will identify parts of the text that help to answer questions.

Itinerary

What is most important to know about when you read a(n)...

folktale? List... (who, what, where, when, main idea, theme, message)

short story? List

article? List

biography? List

autobiography? List

Notice the 5 Ws

Lesson 5

Objective

Students will identify how to structure a short and extended response.

Itinerary

Supply students with extended response questions. Explain that questions need to be supported by evidence. Students may answer the question in the first sentence and then give supporting sentences that have evidence taken directly from the passage.

1. Answer question

2. Evidence

3. Evidence

Lesson 6

Objective

Students will identify that answers need to be supported by evidence from the passage.

Itinerary

We've seen how to structure our answers by giving evidence from the passages. Let's see how these answers will be assessed. Show Smart board of rubric and review meaning of words. This is a rubric that is used to assess your responses to a reading passage. Examine rubric together. Note: "necessary examples included and the information given is clearly text based." Discuss.

Scoring of Responses

Lesson 1

Objective

Students will understand how constructed responses are assessed based on evidence of the following qualities: *Meaning*, *development*, and *organization*.

Meaning - the extent to which the response exhibits sound understanding, interpretation and analysis of the task and text.

Development - the extent to which ideas are supported through the use of specific, accurate, and relevant evidence from the text.

Organization - the extent to which the response exhibits direction, shape, and coherence.

Itinerary

Discuss the meaning of each quality. Read various answers collected from sample questions students have worked on. Discuss and assess responses.

Answer Sheet Skills

Lesson 1

Objective

Students will learn to do a quick check before turning the page to see that all are answered and check answer sheet against the question they were on. Never leave anything blank.

Lesson 2

Objective

Students will identify the proper way to fill in the bubble.

Itinerary

Don't spend a lot of time darkening in the bubble. It may be helpful to answer in the booklet and then bubble in on the corresponding answer sheet.

Lesson 3

Objective

Students will learn never to leave anything blank. It is better to guess than to leave it blank.

Check Your Answers

Lesson 1

Objective

Students will identify which questions to revisit.

Itinerary

Students will have analyzed and completed questions of each type. After going over different types of questions have discussions about the types of questions they found difficult. Everyone is different. Get to know yourself and which questions you need to tune into higher gear for. Know the types of questions that are confusing to you. It is not necessary to do the entire test again.

Lesson 2

Objective

Students will identify which questions to revisit.

Itinerary

Students will practice a few questions from a booklet. If you are confused by a question while working, remember to dig in, read, and ask yourself, "what does the test author want to know?" and if still confused, circle the question in the book, not the answer sheet. Then when you flip back in the book, look for those circled questions like a detective. Find them and reread them.