Scholastic News
Reading Skills Practice Test

About This Test

Our Reading Skills Practice Tests reflect the changing content of the high-stakes standardized tests you and your students face each year. We have studied released test items from many states, including: the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), the New York State Testing Program, the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK), the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments Series II, and others. As a result, our updated Reading Skills Practice Tests for 2008-09 offer the following features:

- Longer reading passages with multiple paragraphs, similar to the ones on state tests.
- Greater variety in reading passage genres, including narrative fiction, folktales, poetry, expository nonfiction (both descriptive and how-to) and more.
- More challenging comprehension questions, including items that test study and organizational skills by asking students to complete idea webs, summaries, diagrams, lists, and charts.
- Open-ended response items, including extended response sections in Tests 1 and 3.

Why Use This Test?

Our practice test can help you and your class in these ways:

Practice: Your students probably take standardized reading tests. Our practice tests focus on the skills kids will be expected to demonstrate. (See annotated answer guide on the right for a detailed list of skills.)

Individualized instruction: A student's performance on the practice test can help you detect strengths and weaknesses. Use the answer guide to pinpoint the types of questions a student might have missed. Then, provide more practice and instruction in those areas.

Curriculum tool: Even if test preparation is not a big concern, our passages and questions can be used for oral reading and discussion to boost comprehension skills. **Our practice tests are not standardized. They should not be used to determine grade level, to compare one student's performance with that of others, or to evaluate teachers' abilities.**

Annotated Answers

SECTION 1: READING COMPREHENSION

Here is the correct answer for each question, as well as a summary of the core skill tested:

1. D Understanding author's purpose: Students should recognize that authors may seek to inform, entertain, or persuade, and they should be able to use clues from the text to identify the specific purpose behind a piece of text.

2. C Vocabulary in context: To identify the meaning of the potentially unfamiliar word "location," students may use a "replace and check" technique with the answer choices. The meaning "place" makes the most sense in the story.

3. B Understanding details: In step 3, students learn that a caterpillar will hatch from the butterfly egg.

4. C Sequencing: Students should be able to put events or steps from a passage in order. In this instance, students should check the passage to see what actions are recommended before planting. In step 2, the author suggests that readers do research.

5. A Organizing information/Understanding details: This question requires students to decide what is missing from a list. Step 6 suggests that readers add a dish of water to the garden.

6. D Understanding main idea: Standardized tests may ask for a passage's main idea in a variety of ways. This question asks students to complete a sentence that gives the main idea of the passage. Another common main-idea question is "What is a good title for this passage?"

7. B Making inferences: Guide students to understand that while this question is not answered explicitly in the passage, clues in the passage can help them make the inference. The fact that the class cheers when Mrs. Mai announces an experiment suggests that the students enjoy experiments.

8. A Summarizing: Students should complete the story summary by identifying the most important ideas in a passage. Key ideas from this passage include that the class did an experiment and that their goal was to learn about washing hands.

9. D Understanding details: Students should be able to identify and recall important details from the passage. If a student has difficulty with this, demonstrate how to return to the passage and scan for keywords from the question. In this case, students can look for the word "seconds."

10. Short response/Making inferences: Point out that students need to "read between the lines" to determine why Sadie asks for permission to use the sink. Clues in the previous paragraph (the fact that Sadie is thinking about her birthday plans and that it takes 20 seconds of hand washing to kill germs) help readers infer that Sadie wants to wash her hands.

SECTION 2: READING COMPREHENSION/ EXTENDED RESPONSE

Student responses will vary. Check that students include at least two reasons from the text that explain how loud sounds are harmful to one's health and two steps they can take to protect themselves.