

Reading Skills

The test has multiple-choice and open-response questions that focus on the reading skills required in school and daily life:

- understanding explicitly (directly) stated ideas and information;
- understanding implicitly (indirectly) stated ideas and information and
- making connections between information and ideas in a reading selection and personal knowledge and experience.

Reading Selections

The reading selections include the following: an information paragraph, a news report, a dialogue, a real-life narrative and a graphic text (e.g., a schedule). They vary in length from a single paragraph to two pages.

Tips for Reading

General Strategies

- Manage your time so that you complete all sections of the test.
- Read the questions first. This will help you predict what the reading selection is going to be about.
- Skim the selection and then read it closely.
- Underline or highlight important information and ideas as you read.
- As you read, think about what you are reading and ask yourself questions about it.
- Try to “see” what you are reading; some readers say this is like running a video or movie in their heads.
- Look for links between what you are reading and experiences you have had.
- If you read a word you don’t understand, look for a root word that you know inside the larger word; look for prefixes and suffixes.
- If you still don’t understand the word, read to the end of the sentence and look for clues to its meaning. Try reading the sentences before and after the sentence to see if you can find the meaning from the context.
- If a long sentence has you confused, reread it and try to put it into your own words.
- If you are having trouble understanding an idea, either read on until the meaning becomes clearer, or stop and reread.

Strategies for Multiple-Choice Reading Questions

- Read and reread the question carefully.
- Read the four answers and rule out any answers that are incorrect.
- If necessary, reread the relevant parts of the selection to choose the best or most correct answer.
- Record the answer on the Student Answer Sheet as described in the test instructions.

Strategies for Open-Response Reading Questions

- Read and reread the question carefully.
- Keep your answer within the six lines provided.
- Answer the question using specific and relevant details and information from the reading selection.
- Make connections between the ideas and information in the reading selection and your own experience.
- Reread your response and correct any errors you notice.

Writing Skills

The test has short- and long-writing tasks, and multiple-choice questions that focus on three writing skills required in school and daily life:

- developing a main idea with sufficient supporting details;
- organizing information and ideas in a coherent manner and
- using conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) in a manner that does not distract from clear communication.

Tips for Writing

It is important that you follow the instructions and write in the required form. Read the assigned topic for each task carefully before you begin to write. Make sure your work is on topic and is in the required form. For the long- and short-writing tasks, use full and correctly written sentences.

A. Long-Writing Tasks

- One of the tasks is writing a **news report** based on a picture and headline provided. Make up facts and information to answer the questions Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How? and write a one-page report on the event. Your audience is an adult reader of a newspaper.

Strategies for the News Report

- Look closely at the headline and picture. Think of an event that relates to them.
 - Make up the information and facts as you answer some or all of the following questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?
 - Pretend you are writing for a newspaper, not for a radio or television station.
 - Do not write an advertisement, for example, as that is not the form of writing required.
 - Write your report using the third person.
- The other long-writing task is a **series of paragraphs** expressing an opinion on a given topic. Develop your main idea with supporting details (proof, facts, examples, etc.) and write a minimum of three paragraphs on the two pages provided for your response. Your audience is an adult who is interested in your opinion.

Strategies for the Series of Paragraphs

- Read the topic question and decide what position you will take in your response.
- Clearly state your opinion at the beginning or end of your response.
- Write at least three paragraphs. Include an introduction, development and a conclusion.

- Support your opinion with reasons and relevant examples or facts.
- Make sure the divisions between paragraphs are clear.

B. Short-Writing Tasks

These tasks give you the opportunity to use your knowledge and personal experience while demonstrating your writing skills.

Strategies for the Short-Writing Task

- Read and reread the question carefully.
- Think of links between the topic and your knowledge and personal experiences.
- Answer the question using specific details and relevant information.
- Reread your response and correct any errors you notice.

C. Multiple-Choice Questions

These multiple-choice questions give you the opportunity to demonstrate the three writing skills.

Strategies for Multiple-Choice Writing Questions

- Read and reread the question carefully.
- Read the four answers and rule out any that are incorrect.
- If necessary, reread the question to choose the best or most correct answer.
- Record the answer on the Student Answer Sheet as described in the test instructions.