



TEXES Science of Teaching Reading (293)

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Preparing to take the TExES Science of Teaching Reading (293)?

Awesome!

You've found the right page. We will answer every question you have and tell you exactly what you need to study to pass the Science of Teaching Reading exam.

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Quick Facts

Overview:

The STR is a new certification exam starting January 2021. It is for teacher candidates who are seeking elementary or middle school certification in Texas. The STR tests your knowledge and understanding of reading pedagogy and the skills related to reading development.

Unsure whether or not you need to take the STR exam? Find the answer here!

Format:

The STR is a computer-based test with 90 multiple-choice questions and one constructed-response question. You will have four hours and 45 minutes to complete the entire exam. There are no subtests in the STR exam, but it does cover information from the four different domains discussed in this study guide.

Cost:

\$136

Scoring:

Since the STR is a new exam, a passing score has not been established yet. This means that there will be an interim period during which test takers will receive a “pass/fail” status until a passing scaled score is determined. Most of the current TExES exams have a passing score of 240, with a score range of 100-300.

Study time:

Study time will vary for each individual test taker, but keep in mind that there are many different concepts covered in the STR exam. You will likely need to start studying several weeks before your exam. Start by taking our free diagnostic test. This will help you determine the concepts that you’ll need to spend the most time studying. Next, create a study plan that ensures you will have enough time to cover all of the material.

What test takers wish they'd known:

- Any personal items (including purses, watches, and cell phones) will be stored in a locker outside of the testing room, so keep the number of items you bring to a minimum.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, it is better to guess than to leave the question unanswered.
- Keep an eye on the time. There are no subtests in the STR, so you'll need to manage your time wisely in order to complete all the questions.
- 240 Tutoring offers free preparation videos for the STR!

Information obtained from the TExES website.

"One month of studying with 240 Tutoring gave me the confidence to take and pass the exam after failing a couple times before."

- Dakota

Domain I:

Reading Pedagogy

Overview

The Reading Pedagogy domain accounts for about 13% of the entire exam.

There are two competencies on the Reading Pedagogy domain:

1. Foundations of the Science of Teaching Reading
2. Foundations of Reading Assessment

Let's explore a few of the specific concepts that are highly likely to appear on the exam.

The Construction of Language

Language is constructed in different ways in order to convey meaning. Some of the basic principles of language include morphology, orthography, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and segmentation.

Let's take a closer look at each of these:

- **Morphology** is the way words are formed by different morphemes. A morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit in a language. Morphological awareness includes the ability to break a word into parts, such as prefixes, suffixes, and root words. For example, the word *unreadable* can be broken down into the prefix *un-*, the root word *read*, and the suffix *-able*.
- **Orthography** is the set of conventions used for writing a language. This includes correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.
- **Syntax** is the way words are ordered to form a logical and grammatically correct sentence. For example, the sentence "He went to the car" would not make sense if it were written as "He the car went to."
- **Semantics** refers to the literal meaning of a word, phrase, or sentence. For example, the sentence "He hit the ground" has a literal meaning of a person hitting the ground with either their hand or body.
- **Pragmatics** refers to the meaning of a word, phrase, or sentence based on the context of a situation. For example, the phrase *hit the ground* has a different meaning in the sentence, "He tripped over his shoelaces and hit the ground," than it does in the sentence, "As soon as he got approval, he hit the ground running."
- **Segmentation** refers to the ability to break a word into its individual sounds or syllables. For examples, the word *fit* can be segmented into its phonemes /f/ /i/ /t/, and the word *upstairs* could be segmented into the syllables *up* and *stairs*.

Process of Learning - Spelling

Children progress through specific stages of spelling development, as described below. It is important that educators are able to recognize what stage of spelling development a child is in so that they can provide appropriate instruction to help move the child from one stage to the next. Let's take a look at each stage of spelling development.

1. **Precommunicative spelling** - In the precommunicative spelling stage, children will use letters of the alphabet, but without understanding that letters produce specific sounds (letter-sound correspondence). A child at this stage will write random letters to represent different words. For example, a child might write "g Xj B" to represent "I went to the park."
2. **Semiphonetic spelling** - As children begin to understand that certain letters are related to specific sounds, they will begin to use semiphonetic spelling. At this stage a child will often use one letter to represent each word, with a basic understanding of letter-sound correspondence. For example, "I am playing with you" might be written as "I M p U."
3. **Phonetic spelling (invented spelling)** - In this stage, children use a letter or group of letters to represent each sound that they are able to hear in a word. While their spelling may not follow conventional patterns, the words can often be understood by the student's teacher or will make sense once the student reads their writing out loud. An example of phonetic spelling would be a child writing "My dog is running" as "Mi dog iz rune."
4. **Transitional spelling** - In this stage, children begin to use conventional spelling patterns and letter-sound relationships that they have learned. While their work will still contain spelling errors, most adults will be able to understand what the child intended to write. A child in the transitional spelling stage may write "We might get to jump on the trampoline" as "We mite get to jump on the trampolean."
5. **Conventional spelling** - Children at this stage will follow conventional spelling patterns the majority of the time and will spell most words correctly. Spelling errors at this stage are reserved for uncommon words or words that follow nontraditional spelling patterns. A student at this stage might write "I am going on an airplane to visit my grandparents in Tenisee." Note that the only spelling error in this sentence is "Tenisee" for "Tennessee," which is not a word that the student would be frequently exposed to.

Response to Intervention (RTI)

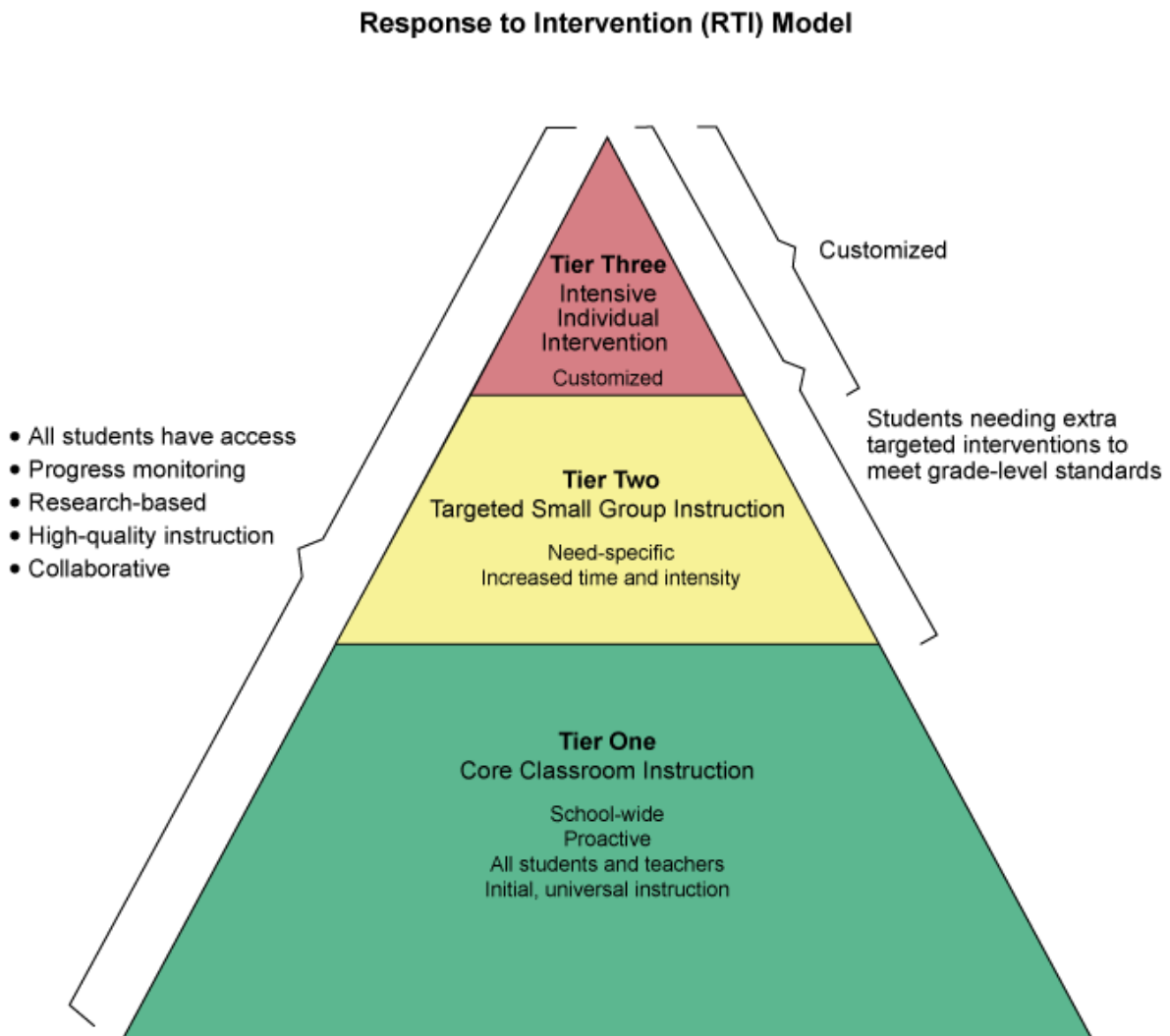
Response to Intervention, or RTI, is a process used by educators to identify and support students' academic and/or behavioral needs. Using the RTI model, students receive varying degrees of academic or behavioral support. This support is referred to in terms of **tiers**. RTI includes three tiers, with tier three being the most intensive. Let's take a closer look at each RTI tier:

- **Tier 1:** This tier includes all regular classroom instruction. All students receive Tier 1 support. Students are regularly assessed or screened in order to identify students who may need additional interventions. If students are not making adequate progress, they should be monitored closely to determine if Tier 2 interventions are needed.
- **Tier 2:** Students who are not making adequate progress with standard Tier 1 classroom

instruction may need Tier 2 RTI support. Tier 2 includes frequent small group instruction in addition to regular classroom instruction. The small group instruction can be done by the classroom teacher or by a campus interventionist. Progress monitoring should occur frequently to determine whether the student can return to Tier 1 or whether Tier 3 interventions should be considered.

- **Tier 3:** Students at the Tier 3 level receive intensive, individualized intervention along with regular classroom instruction. This is typically provided by a campus interventionist who specializes in the area that the student needs support in. Tier 3 support should be customized to meet the student's specific needs. If Tier 3 support is ineffective, further evaluations may need to be considered.

The RTI process should be ongoing and flexible. Teachers should continuously monitor student progress and make adjustments to their RTI plans as needed. For example, a student may need Tier 2 support for a time, then successfully return to Tier 1.



Key Assessment Concepts

There are several important factors that educators should keep in mind when developing or administering assessments. Let's take a look at some of these concepts:

- **Congruence** means that an assessment relates to the specific learning goal that is being evaluated and aligns with what was taught. For example, a spelling assessment should only evaluate spelling patterns that have previously been taught.
- **Reliability** means that an assessment will consistently produce similar results for the same test taker. If a test has high reliability, a student taking an equivalent test on different days might score an 88%, 86%, and 89%. On the other hand, if the test has low reliability, a student taking the test might score 90% one day, 48% the next day, and 71% on the next day.
- **Validity** means that an assessment accurately measures what it is intending to measure. For example, a kindergarten teacher evaluating students' listening comprehension skills should read a short passage to the students and ask questions, rather than asking students to read the passage by themselves. Asking students to read the passage by themselves would assess their reading level and/or fluency, which is not what the assessment is trying to measure.
- **Absence of bias** - While it is difficult to eliminate all bias in testing, educators should try to make assessments as unbiased as possible. This means that tests should not automatically favor one population over another. For example, a test that asks students to read a passage about a skiing vacation and answer comprehension questions will be easier for students who have been skiing, giving these students an unfair advantage.
- **Clarity of language** - Questions should always be clear and easy to understand. Tests should assess a student's knowledge and skills rather than their ability to decipher the intended meaning of a question.
- **Appropriate level** - Assessments should be age- and grade-appropriate. Teachers should take into account subject matter, length, and the type of question or activity when determining if an assessment is appropriate for a particular grade level.

And that's just some very basic information about the Reading Pedagogy domain.

Domain I Practice Questions

Question 1

A group of second-grade students has moved from the full-alphabetic phase to the consolidated-alphabetic phase. To help students read words accurately in this new phase, the teacher should focus on which of the following?

- A. helping students take their knowledge of grapheme-phoneme blends and use them to read larger units of language
- B. helping students sound out unfamiliar words using the phonemic awareness skills they have learned
- C. helping students use context clues to determine how to pronounce and define words they do not recognize
- D. helping students automatically recognize high-frequency words they did not master in earlier phases

Correct answer: A. These are the skills students will need in order to master the consolidated-alphabetic phase.

Question 2

A second-grade class recently welcomed a new student whose native language is Spanish. The teacher conducts a series of assessments to determine the best sequence of reading instruction for this student. After collecting data from several sources, the teacher determines the English Language Learner is in the partial-alphabetic stage of reading development. Which of the following text types should the teacher use to help the new student develop basic reading skills?

- A. non-fiction texts with photographs and captions for the student to reference
- B. easily decodable texts featuring letter sounds the teacher has introduced
- C. fiction texts with a simple plot structure and few main characters
- D. parallel texts featuring a story written in both English and Spanish

Correct answer: B. These types of texts focus on building a student's letter-sound knowledge and phonemic awareness, which are skills the student needs in order to move from the partial alphabetic phase to the full alphabetic phase.

Question 3

A kindergarten teacher has implemented reading instruction to help students master the basics of phonological awareness, phonics, and print awareness. Instruction is systematic and explicit, and the teacher presents skills in an order consistent with the developmental reading continuum. To best meet the instructional needs of each student throughout the year, the teacher should:

- A. introduce new phonics skills in several ways to account for various learning styles.
- B. frequently assess each student's reading development and adjust instruction accordingly.
- C. provide uniform instruction to everyone in the class to provide equal learning opportunities.
- D. regularly send home results of student assessments to increase parental involvement.

Correct answer: B. In order to best meet the needs of students, the teacher should perform formal and informal assessments frequently and use them to inform instructional choices.

Question 4

A prekindergarten class contains several students who have had very little exposure to printed text. What strategies should the teacher implement to help this group of students develop print and phonological awareness?

- A. conduct read alouds using predictable texts and practice rhyming words using nursery rhymes and games
- B. have students read one alphabet reader a week with a partner who has achieved a higher level of print awareness
- C. dedicate a portion of daily instruction to introducing sight words and practicing them until students achieve automaticity
- D. invite students to choose their independent reading books for silent reading time to increase student engagement

Correct answer: A. Conducting read alouds with predictable texts helps students learn print awareness, and practicing rhyming words in fun ways helps students learn phonological awareness skills.

Question 5

A first-grade teacher is forming reading intervention groups. All of the following assessments would be useful for this teacher to utilize except:

- A. a phonics skills assessment.
- B. an oral reading fluency skills test.
- C. a story retelling assessment.
- D. a reading interest inventory.

Correct answer: D. Because reading groups are being formed to provide interventions for students, a reading interest inventory would not be a useful assessment for the teacher to reference. The main priority should be for the teacher to pick texts that fit the intervention being provided, not the students' interests.

Use the following example of a fluency assessment to answer questions 6 and 7

A third-grade teacher is looking over the results of a student's oral reading fluency assessment. The results are as follows:

Passage Assessment Level: Early third grade

Accuracy rate: 93%

Error rate: 1:10 (an average of 1 error for every 10 words read)

Self-correction rate: 1:5 (makes an average of 1 self-correction per 5 errors)

After examining these results, the teacher conferences with the student privately. Below is a transcript of their conference.

Teacher: While you were reading, I noticed you used some good reading strategies. When you read the word *add* instead of *ask*, you made a face because it didn't sound right and reread it correctly. I could tell you were thinking about the story events, and that helped you fill in the right word. Let's take a look at another word (pointing to the word *set* in the passage). You read *let*. Let's read the first letter. What is it?

Student: It's s. I see! It says set!

Teacher: That's right! When you read *let*, it somewhat went with the passage, but didn't sound right. The word *set* goes well in the passage, and it also sounds correct when reading the text.

Question 6

The transcript of this teacher-student conference shows the teacher understands the importance of:

- A. encouraging students by pointing out successes within the assessment and providing positive feedback.
- B. pointing out the student's successes and providing constructive feedback to facilitate continued growth.
- C. using a variety of student data to place students on an appropriate reading level and provide targeted interventions.
- D. pointing out the student's errors and providing targeted interventions to prevent the student from making the same mistake repeatedly.

Correct Answer: B. The teacher points out what the student does well but also provides feedback on how the student can improve. When teachers start a conversation out with positive feedback, it makes students more receptive to hearing areas of improvement.

Question 7

Which of the following strategies would be the most appropriate for the teacher to implement in subsequent class periods to help this student continue to improve?

- A. seat the student with another student struggling to monitor comprehension for partner reading activities
- B. assign the student lower level texts to read and offer higher-level texts as reading accuracy improves
- C. provide small group instruction to this student and other peers working on self-monitoring strategies
- D. conduct read alouds during circle time modeling reading with accuracy, inflection, and appropriate reading rate

Correct Answer: C. This is the best approach for the teacher to take because it will provide targeted instruction to the student and other peers facing similar reading challenges.

Question 8

A second-grade teacher recently received a new student who has been diagnosed with dyslexia. Which of the following approaches should the teacher implement during reading instructional time?

- A. a text-heavy curriculum with daily silent reading time
- B. a multimodal curriculum with various literacy activities
- C. a technology-based curriculum with speak-to-text software
- D. a modified curriculum with adapted texts and large print books

Correct Answer: B. Students with dyslexia benefit from literacy activities in several modes of instruction (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc.). Dyslexia is a neurological reading disability that especially affects a student's ability to decode written text. Therefore, presenting literacy skills in several ways helps students with dyslexia make academic progress.

Question 9

A first-grade teacher teaches three sight words per week during the course of the fall semester. This includes reading books and playing games containing the words. At the end of six weeks of instruction, she has students take turns individually reading all the sight words taught over the six week pe-

riod from the word wall. The teacher then records the percentage of words each student reads correctly as a grade in the grade book. Which of the following assessment types is this teacher utilizing?

- A. summative assessment
- B. formative assessments
- C. diagnostic assessment
- D. norm-based assessment

Correct Answer: A. This is an example of a summative assessment because the teacher is assessing what students have learned after a longer period of instruction. Summative assessments are given only a few times throughout the course of the year and assess a student's cumulative knowledge.

Domain II:

Reading Development: Foundational Skills

Overview

The Reading Development: Foundational Skills domain accounts for about 43% of the entire exam.

There are six competencies on the Reading Development: Foundational Skills domain:

1. Oral Language Foundations of Reading Development
2. Phonological and Phonemic Awareness
3. Print Concepts and Alphabetic Knowledge
4. Phonics and Other Word Identification Skills
5. Syllabication and Morphemic Analysis Skills
6. Reading Fluency

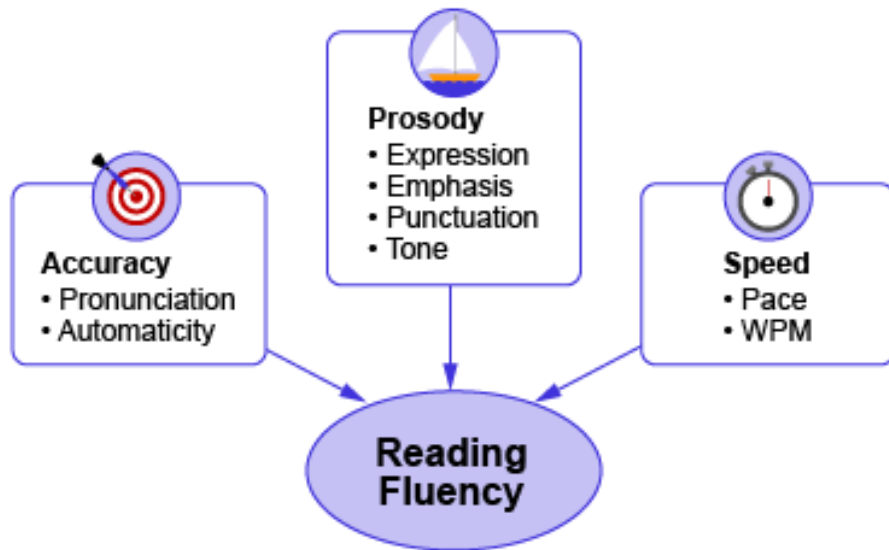
Let's explore a few of the specific concepts that are highly likely to appear on the exam.

Measuring Reading Fluency

Reading fluency can be divided into three key components: accuracy, prosody, and speed. Each of these aspects should be considered when evaluating fluency.

- **Accuracy** refers to a student's ability to read words correctly and automatically. Accuracy is usually measured by listening to a student read out loud and tracking how many words they read correctly within a specific time frame.
 - To be a truly fluent reader, students must accurately pronounce words with **automaticity**, which is the ability to read words effortlessly.
- **Prosody** refers to using appropriate emphasis, tone, and expression while reading. This includes pausing at appropriate punctuation marks. Prosody can be difficult to measure using quantitative methods, but should still be noted and taken into account when measuring fluency.
- **Speed** refers to the pace at which a student reads a text. Students should read quickly enough to remember what they read in previous sections but slowly enough to understand what they are reading. Speed is typically measured using words per minute (WPM).

Accuracy and speed are often combined in order to get a student's "words correct per minute" (WCPM).



ELL Teaching Tips for Oral Language

English language learners, or ELLs, benefit from specific reading fluency instruction. These instructional strategies include:

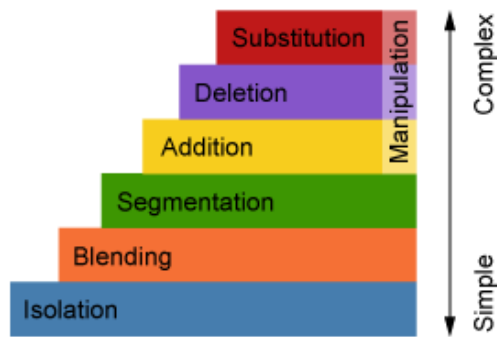
- **Modeling** - Teachers can model good fluency and expression through shared reading. During shared reading, the teacher reads a text aloud to students while students follow along, either in their own books or by following a book with print that is large enough for the students to see while the teacher is reading.
- **Rereading** - Reading a text multiple times allows students to practice fluency and improves comprehension. Teachers should guide students as they reread a text by asking questions that focus on different levels of comprehension each time through.
- **Filling in background knowledge** - While background knowledge is important for all students, it is important to remember that some ELL students may not have the same background knowledge as their classmates. Before reading a book, teachers should consider whether the text has any concepts that their ELL students may not be familiar with, such as a particular holiday or sport. These concepts can then be explained to students ahead of time through the use of pictures, videos, or real-world examples.
- **Providing multiple opportunities for students to read aloud** - Any time students read aloud, they improve their fluency and expression. This can be done in various ways, including:
 - Echo reading: The teacher reads a portion of text aloud (usually one or two sentences) and students repeat it back, following the expression and intonation that the teacher used.
 - Choral reading: Students read a text aloud together at the same time. This can be done with a small group or with the whole class.

- o Reader’s Theater: Students are assigned different character roles from a book. Students practice reading their character’s “lines” with expression and fluency, and then read their parts to the class or to an audience.
- o Partner reading: Two students work together to read a text by taking turns reading aloud to each other.
- **Focusing on vocabulary development** - ELL students benefit from specific vocabulary instruction. Previewing new vocabulary words before a read-aloud or guided reading can improve comprehension and make a book more enjoyable for ELL students.

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is one of many components included in phonological awareness. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate phonemes (the smallest units of sounds in a word). When assessing a student’s phonemic awareness, a teacher will often say a word or a set of phonemes aloud and ask the student to identify or manipulate the individual sounds. Let’s look at some examples of how this can be done. Each phonemic awareness skill is listed below, along with an example of how to evaluate the skill.

Phonemic Awareness skills	Teacher says	Student Says
Isolation	What is the beginning sound in pat?	/p/
Blending	/p/-/a/-/t/	pat
Segmentation	pat	/p/-/a/-/t/
Addition	What word do you get when you add /s/ to the end of pat?	pats
Deletion	What word do you get when you take the /p/ away from pat?	at
Substitution	What happens when you change the /p/ in pat to /c/?	cat



Importance of Phonological Awareness on Literacy

Phonological awareness is the ability to identify and manipulate different units of sound in a spoken language. This includes the ability to count syllables, generate rhyming words, and isolate phonemes within words. Phonological awareness is a crucial skill for students to develop. Strong phonological awareness can lead to increased fluency, improved comprehension, and effective spelling strategies.

Syllable Awareness

Syllable awareness is an important component of phonological awareness. All words can be broken down into syllables, with each syllable having a vowel sound. Children are often taught to “clap out” the syllables by saying the word aloud and clapping one time for each syllable. Let’s take a look at a few examples:

Word	Syllable Breakdown	Number of Syllables
ball	ball	1
fantastic	fan-tas-tic	2
hippopotamus	hip-po-pot-a-mus	5

Concepts of Print

Concepts of print are early literacy skills that help children understand the function of letters, words, sentences, books, and other types of text. Concepts of print include:

- **Print awareness:** Understanding that print or text conveys a message
- **Directionality:** Understanding that text is read from left to right and top to bottom, and understanding how to move from the end of one line of text to the beginning of the next line (the “return sweep”)
- **Book awareness:** Recognizing that books have a cover, a back, and an author, and that the pages of a book are turned from left to right

Diphthongs

A diphthong is a combination of two vowel sounds within the same syllable. Examples of diphthongs include the *ou* in *cloud*, the *oi* in *foil*, and the *au* in *taught*. While many diphthongs may initially seem like one single sound, they actually involve the tongue moving from one position to another when saying the sound out loud.

Sight Words vs. Decodable Words

Sight words are words that students should be able to recognize automatically, or upon first sight, without having to use decoding strategies. Sight words are seen frequently in text and sometimes don't follow conventional letter-sound patterns. Examples of sight words include *the*, *should*, *know*, and *was*.

Decodable words are words that students should be able to decode, or "sound out," by using letter-sound relationships that have been previously taught. The number of words that a child should be able to decode will increase as the child learns additional phonics rules. For example, at the beginning of the year, a first-grade student should be able to decode words such as *sat* and *big*. As students receive additional phonics instruction throughout the year, the number of words they can decode will expand to include words like *watching*, *coin*, and *reach*.

R-Controlled Vowels

R-controlled vowels occur when any of the five vowels are followed directly by the letter *r*. The *r* changes the sound that the vowel makes. Examples of r-controlled vowels include the *-ar* in *car*, the *-ir* in *bird*, and the *-or* in *form*.

And that's just some very basic information about the Reading Development: Foundational Skills domain.

Domain II: Practice Questions

Question 1

A third-grade teacher administers a fluency benchmark halfway through the year and notices several students in the class are reading in the 80th percentile or above when it comes to Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM). However, when reading out loud, this same group of students reads without proper inflection or phrasing. Which of the following strategies should the teacher implement in order to help these students?

- A. have students participate in reader's theatre several times per week
- B. provide additional instruction on decoding multisyllabic words
- C. teach students to recognize common syntactical patterns in sentences
- D. increase time allocated to class discussions and verbal presentations

Correct Answer: A. Reader's theatre helps students build their prosody skills because they hear proper inflection and phrasing modeled by classmates who have already mastered these skills.

Question 2

A second-grade teacher is starting a new science unit on living organisms and their environments. She seats students in pairs and assigns them an article and multiple-choice questions on the topic. That afternoon, she checks their work and notices most students missed a majority of the comprehension questions. Which of the following statements best describes why students were unsuccessful on the assignment?

- A. The students had not achieved mastery in the following areas: reading rate, prosody, or word accuracy.
- B. The students are largely uninterested in the topic and would rather read an article about something else.
- C. The students were likely unfamiliar with the tier-three vocabulary words and concepts discussed in the article.
- D. The students were not able to decode words featuring a CVC pattern and require additional phonics instruction in this area.

Correct Answer: C. Because the unit was on new science concepts the students had not been exposed to, there were likely tier-three words in the article the students did not know. The teacher should pre-teach unfamiliar words and new concepts before reading an article on the topic in the future.

Question 3

A first-grade teacher is working with students to improve their automaticity of sight words. The class includes several students whose native language is not English. In order to help this group read sight words automatically and accurately, the teacher should first implement which of the following strategies?

- A. have students practice reading the words in isolation on index cards before using them in small group instruction
- B. utilize short, repetitive readings containing sight words as well as illustrations to match the events of the text
- C. read the same short texts in both English and the student's native language in order to help them transfer their knowledge from one language to the other
- D. seat each student with a partner and have them compete to see who can read the list of sight words first with perfect accuracy

Correct Answer: B. English Language Learners benefit from illustrations and visuals of what they are reading. As students read the text, the illustrations will help them visualize the story and decode more efficiently.

Question 4

A first-grade class has recently finished reading the story *The Three Little Pigs*. After reading, the teacher asks students to complete the organizer below with their table partners.

Somebody	
Wanted	
But	
So	
Then	
Complete Sentence	_____.

After completing the organizer, the teacher asks several students to share the sentence they wrote.

One student shares the following sentence: "The pigs wanted to build houses but the wolf wanted to blow them down."

The teacher then says, "So, then what happened?"

The teacher brings in several building materials (toothpicks, marshmallows, tape, toilet paper rolls) for the students to use to construct their own mini-houses. Students then put their mini-houses in front of a fan to see how they would hold up against a "big bad wolf." After their house goes in front of the fan, students use a chart to record what they used to build their house and how the materials behaved in front of the fan. After every student has participated, the teacher holds a class discussion comparing and contrasting which materials built the best house and why. These class activities help the students:

- A. develop their oral language skills as they discuss the results of the experiment.
- B. develop their listening skills as they take questions from other students.
- C. develop their metacognitive skills as they think about their own thinking during the activity.
- D. develop their interpersonal skills as they use the guidelines set forth for class discussions.

Correct Answer: A. Students are developing their oral language skills while comparing and contrasting the materials used and why or why not they were effective in the experiment.

Question 5

A first-grade teacher calls each student to her desk individually, gives them a word, such as *mop*, and asks them to replace the first sound with a new sound, such as */h/*. Students are then assessed on their ability to make the new word out of the given word and new sound, in this case, *hop*. Which of the following developing reading skills is the teacher evaluating by administering this assessment?

- A. print awareness
- B. phonemic awareness
- C. fluency skills
- D. vocabulary development

Correct Answer: B. Phonemic awareness is the student's ability to manipulate phonemes, the smallest units of sound containing meaning. As students switch out the sounds to make new words, they are working on manipulating phonemes.

Question 6

A kindergarten teacher is working on isolating initial phonemes with a small group of students. Two of the students are English Language Learners whose native language is Spanish. Which of the following approaches should the teacher take while working with these students?

- A. conduct a group activity on consonant blends and digraphs
- B. give these two students an alternative activity identifying letters of the alphabet
- C. choose words with common Spanish and English cognates
- D. teach the chosen words as sight words before isolating the initial phonemes

Correct Answer: C. It is much easier for students to begin by learning the sounds in English that are the same as in their native language, Spanish. This gives students a good foundation of sounds to build on as they develop their phonemic awareness skills.

Question 7

7. Students in a kindergarten class participate in the following activities during daily circle time:

- singing nursery rhymes
- stomping out the number of syllables in animal names
- playing a game of I Spy to identify objects that rhyme with a given sound

These activities will help students to:

- A. build phonological awareness skills by playing with language in an engaging way.
- B. develop alphabetic awareness skills by matching rhyming words that start with the same sound.
- C. learn phoneme-grapheme correspondence by identifying individual syllables in animal names.
- D. manipulating phonemes by isolating individual speech sounds in words.

Correct Answer: A. These activities engage students and hold their interest while they develop foundational phonological awareness skills.

Question 8

8. A kindergarten teacher gives a small group of students four cards, each one numbered with a one, two, three, or four. Then, the group receives a bucket of plastic kitchen food (ex. egg, biscuit, banana, watermelon). The teacher models the activity by saying “bis-cuit,” clapping once during the “bis-” part of the word, and once during the “-cuit” part. Then, the teacher places the piece of food under the correct number. Students conduct this process for the rest of the food on the table and sort each piece into the right category, one, two, three, or four. The teacher’s main goal for this activity is for students to learn how to:

- A. read compound words.
- B. spell common vocabulary words.
- C. pronounce words correctly.
- D. separate words into syllables.

Correct Answer: D. In this activity, each clap represents a syllable within the word, and students are sorting each piece of food according to the number of syllables it has.

Question 9

In a kindergarten class, several students have mastered the letter-sound relationships for the consonant letters *g*, *d*, and *b*. In addition, the students have mastered the short vowel sound for the letter *o*. This group of students also consistently uses initial and final consonant sounds correctly when spelling words during writing time. In order to help this group of students develop along the continuum of knowledge and skills related to the alphabetic principle, the teacher should take which of the following steps?

- A. Have the students write each of the letters they have mastered on a t-chart and list all the words they know that start with each letter.
- B. In a small group, read simple, decodable texts containing the letter sounds students have mastered, modeling how the letter sounds combine to form words.
- C. Conduct read alouds for the group containing words with the letters they have mastered, as well as new letter sounds the teacher wants to introduce.
- D. Introduce spelling lists made up of words containing the letters students have mastered and have students practice writing the words several times daily.

Correct Answer: B. The next step the teacher should take is to introduce simple, decodable texts that include the letters that have been mastered and model how to pronounce the words included in the text. This helps the student move along the continuum of knowledge and skills related to the alphabetic principle.

Question 10

A first-grade teacher is planning a series of phonics lessons. Before beginning the lessons, the teacher administers a pre-test to each student on the skills that will be covered. After the lessons, the teacher administers a post-test to each student. The following is an example of one student's assessment.

Pre-Test Word List	Student Reads	Post-Test Word List	Student Reads
shop	hop	thin	think
dish	dist	wish	dish
three	three	sheep	sheep
cheese	chee	chair	cheer
when	hen	wheel	what

After examining this student's post-assessment data, the teacher decides to provide additional learning opportunities in which of the following areas?

- A. consonant digraphs
- B. consonant blends
- C. blending phonemes
- D. segmenting phonemes

Correct Answer: A. The student in this post-assessment is still facing difficulties with consonant digraphs. A digraph is two consonants that make one sound. The student mispronounces the words "thin, wish, chair, and wheel," which all contain consonant digraphs.

Question 11

An elementary classroom contains several English Language Learners with different native language backgrounds. The teacher gives these students a series of word sort activities featuring various word endings (such as -ed, -ing, -er, and -est). This type of activity shows students how to:

- A. use word parts to form new words to use when speaking and writing.
- B. recognize and decode words with prefixes and suffixes.
- C. use cognates common in the students' native languages as well as English to learn new words
- D. recognize and use inflectional word endings they are unfamiliar with.

Correct Answer: D. This activity helps students learn new inflectional word endings to use when speaking or writing.

Domain III:

Reading Development: Comprehension

Overview

The Reading Development: Comprehension domain accounts for about 24% of the entire exam.

There are four competencies on the Reading Development: Comprehension domain:

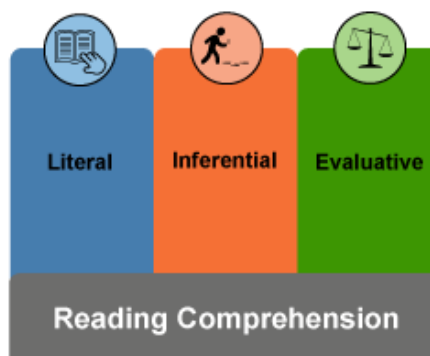
1. Vocabulary Development
2. Comprehension Development
3. Comprehension of Literary Texts
4. Comprehension of Informational Texts

Let's explore a few of the specific concepts that are highly likely to appear on the exam.

Levels of Comprehension

There are three levels of comprehension that occur when reading: literal, inferential, and evaluative.

- **Literal comprehension** involves recall of information from the text. Questions at this level can be answered by recalling information or looking back at the text. Literal comprehension questions might ask about character names, dates, facts, main idea, setting, or details.
- **Inferential comprehension** involves interpretation of the text. The answer to questions at this level cannot be found directly in the text, but can be inferred based on clues within the text. Inferential comprehension questions might ask the reader to make predictions, infer how a character is feeling, or explain the reasons for a character's actions.
- **Evaluative comprehension** involves the reader forming opinions in relation to the text. Evaluative comprehension questions might ask the reader to argue a particular point of view, judge whether information is credible, or form an opinion about a character.



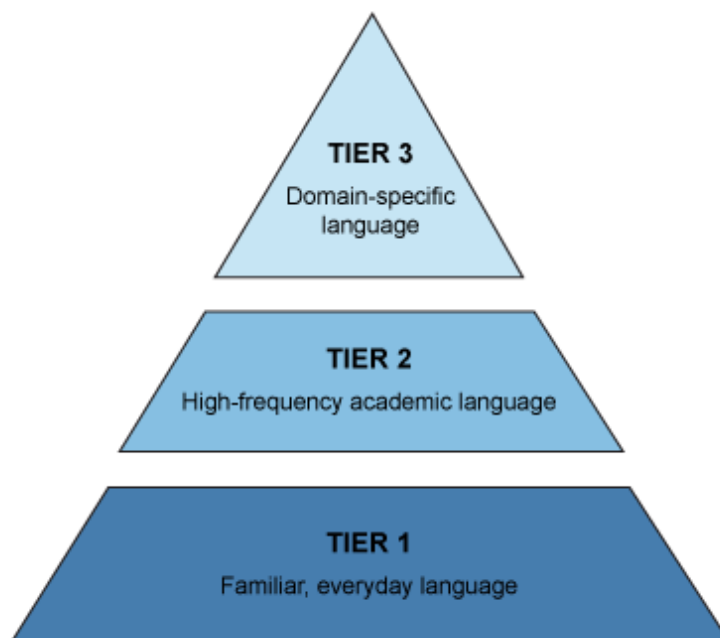
Teaching Active Reading

Active reading is reading with the intent to understand and connect with the text. Active reading improves comprehension and increases student engagement. Teachers can help students develop active reading strategies by asking comprehension questions, by encouraging students to make connections to the text, and by modeling good metacognition during read-alouds or guided reading. For example, a teacher might pause during a read aloud and think out loud by saying, “I wonder what will happen next. I know that the wolf is clever and wants to get Little Red Riding Hood, so I predict that he will try to trick her somehow.” Teachers can also encourage students to make connections to the text by asking questions such as “What does this story make you think of?” or “When have you felt like this character?”

Tiers of Vocabulary

There are three main tiers that can be used to categorize vocabulary.

- **Tier 1** includes common, everyday words that are used in conversation, such as *jump*, *sad*, or *chair*. Tier 1 words are usually learned through conversation and typically do not require specific vocabulary instruction.
- **Tier 2** includes words that are used frequently in academic settings but less often in conversation, such as *beneficial*, *contrast*, or *necessary*. These words usually require explicit vocabulary instruction. Students will encounter Tier 2 words across multiple content areas, so it is important that they understand their meaning.
- **Tier 3** words are content-specific words that are used infrequently outside of a certain topic, such as *meteorologist*, *photosynthesis*, or *circumference*. Tier 3 words should be taught within the context of a specific subject or lesson.



Nonfiction Texts

Nonfiction texts are factual texts that are typically written to inform or explain. Nonfiction texts cover real events, real people, or facts. Students are often taught to recognize specific features of nonfiction texts such as headings, bold font, captions, indexes, or charts. Let's take a look at some of the different types of nonfiction texts:

- **Expository** texts discuss specific topics, events, or subjects. Examples include textbooks and news articles.
- **Procedural** texts explain how to do something step-by-step. Examples include cookbooks or instruction manuals.
- **Persuasive** texts use facts and opinions to convince the reader to either do something or to take a particular stance on a subject. Examples include opinion articles and campaign advertisements.
- **Biographies** describe important events in a person's life and are written by someone else. The subject of the biography is usually a well-known person or a historical figure. An example of a biography is *Washington: A Life* by Ron Chernow.
- **Autobiographies** are similar to biographies, but they are written by the person whom the text is about. An example is *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* by Benjamin Franklin.
- A **memoir** is a self-written text about part of a person's life, usually focusing on an emotional or significant life event. An example is *Eat, Pray, Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert.

Choosing Culturally Responsive Texts

When selecting texts for the classroom, it is important that teachers consider diversity, cultural sensitivity, and appropriateness of the text. The books in a classroom should reflect the various interests and backgrounds of the students. Classroom books should include characters of different races, nationalities, backgrounds, cultures, and family structures. It is also important that the teacher evaluate the sensitivity and appropriateness of the texts used in their classroom by examining the topics covered in the text and by looking closely at how a group or character is portrayed.

And that's just some very basic information about the Reading Development: Comprehension domain.

Domain III Practice Questions

Question 1

A third-grade class is working on an Earth Science unit. The teacher has students read a series of articles on topics that will be covered throughout the unit. Within the articles are bolded vocabulary words the students will be tested over at the end of the semester. In order to help students familiarize themselves with these words, the teacher tells them to make a Frayer model in their notebooks for each word they are expected to know. The teacher creates the following model with the students while introducing the activity:

Somebody	
Wanted	
But	
So	
Then	
Complete Sentence	_____.

The teacher would like to encourage students to use their Frayer Models to incorporate more vocabulary words into their daily writing journals. The teacher could accomplish this goal by:

- A. teaching students how to use a thesaurus to look up additional synonyms to add to their organizers, and subsequently, their writing.
- B. modeling how to take a piece of writing students have already created and revise it to include more advanced vocabulary words.
- C. conducting a mini-lesson on adding non-examples to the students' Frayer models and using them in their writing.
- D. providing a sharing time for students to compare their completed organizers with each other and collaborate on peer editing activities.

Correct Answer: A. This activity would teach students how to add to their organizers and then use the words in their writing, which matches the teacher's goal.

Question 2

A second-grade teacher has been using fictional texts during small group instruction with several English Language Learners. Each of the four students has achieved a different proficiency level when it comes to reading and summarizing text. Two of the students seem ready to focus on making inferences about text, whereas the other two require more direct instruction on basic comprehension skills. The teacher would like to use texts that all four students can relate to and find accessible. Which of the following types of fictional text would be best for the teacher to utilize during this activity?

- A. historical fiction
- B. folktales
- C. mysteries
- D. science fiction

Correct Answer: B. With universal themes, folktales are very accessible texts for English Language Learners. By using this type of text, the teacher could cover multiple skills in a small group lesson without having to build a student's prior knowledge beforehand.

Question 3

3. A second-grade class is halfway through a class novel. The teacher is designing a formative assessment to determine each student's ability to make a prediction. Which of the following approaches should the teacher take when designing the assessment?

- A. ask students to list a main character's physical and personality traits along with quotes as evidence
- B. give each student a blank piece of paper and have them draw a scene from the novel based on what they visualized while reading
- C. have students guess what happens next in the text and provide support with text evidence
- D. provide students with a list of vocabulary terms from the novel and have students create a sentence for each one

Correct Answer: C. This assessment asks students to make a prediction about the second half of the novel. Asking students to use textual evidence encourages them to make logical, educated predictions instead of wild guesses.

Question 4

A third-grade teacher is introducing a unit on plants. Part of the unit plan calls for students to read complex texts on the topic, many of which contain unfamiliar vocabulary words. The teacher takes the students on a nature walk to sketch several types of plants and talk about their favorite ones. The teacher also takes the class out to the school vegetable garden to discuss the differences and similarities between the different plants. These pre-reading activities will help the students:

- A. gain additional background knowledge before reading the texts.
- B. identify expository text structures as they read.
- C. determine what they know, would like to know, and what they learned about plants.
- D. write more complete summaries of the texts after reading.

Correct Answer: A. These activities will help activate prior knowledge the students have about plants, getting them ready to read the articles throughout the course of the unit.

Question 5

A first-grade teacher would like to model metacognitive reading strategies with her students. Which of the following activities would be best for the teacher to implement to accomplish this goal?

- A. holding small group interventions where the teacher shows students how to use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words
- B. conducting a think aloud in which the teacher reads the text orally, stopping along the way to ask questions and model making predictions
- C. meeting one on one with each student in the class to ask comprehension questions about a complex text the teacher read aloud to the class
- D. have students participate in a reader's theatre activity twice a week in which the teacher models reading with accuracy and prosody

Correct Answer: B. Conducting a think aloud while reading a text is the best way to teach students metacognitive reading strategies. Using metacognitive thinking requires students to think about their own thinking, which is something many students will not do naturally without explicit modeling.

Question 6

A third-grade teacher is introducing a new unit on the different forms of energy and notices one of the English Language Learners in the class is struggling to complete a science lab worksheet. The teacher reviews the student's data and notices he scored in the 70th percentile for words correct per minute on a recent fluency assessment. He also scored an 80 on a recent reading comprehension assessment. Given this data, which of the following statements best explains why this student is experiencing difficulties?

- A. The student is struggling with the tier one and tier two vocabulary words printed on the lab worksheet.
- B. The student is not self-monitoring comprehension while reading and needs to be taught annotation strategies.
- C. The student does not have enough prior knowledge about the topic to be successful on the lab worksheet.
- D. The student is likely not interested in the topic and would rather complete another type of assignment.

Correct Answer: C. This is likely the reason for the student's difficulties because the fluency and reading comprehension data show the student's ability to read grade-level texts successfully.

Question 7

A second-grade teacher assigns each table group a different fictional text to read. After reading, each group receives a set of cards, and each card lists one main event from the story. The teacher asks students to put the cards in the correct order. This activity will teach students how to:

- A. sequence the plot points from the story.
- B. predict what comes next in the story.
- C. compare and contrast multiple texts they have read.
- D. identify the protagonist and antagonist within the story.

Correct Answer: A. Arranging the cards in the correct order will teach students how to sequence the main plot points from the story.

Question 8

In an effort to boost nonfiction comprehension skills, a second-grade teacher reads two articles with her students, one on amphibians and one on reptiles. After reading the articles as a class, she has students complete a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the two readings. Later in the week, students make a timeline based on an article entitled, "The True Cost of Rainforest Loss." These activities help students:

- A. memorize tier three vocabulary words from various subject areas.
- B. record research on the same topic from multiple sources efficiently.
- C. organize information obtained from cross-curricular readings.
- D. evaluate print sources based on validity and reliability.

Correct Answer: C. These activities help students graphically organize the information from cross-curricular readings in the areas of science and social studies.

Question 9

A first-grade teacher is reading aloud from an instructional text on the life cycle of a butterfly. During the reading, she stops to think-aloud with the goal of teaching the class a specific reading skill. Here is an excerpt of the think-aloud with the teacher's dialogue in italics.

There are four parts to the life cycle of a butterfly. First, a butterfly lays an ovum, or egg, on a leaf. *I wonder what an "ovum" is. I'm going to reread the sentence before and look at the phrases around the word to see if I can figure it out. The word "egg" is right after, and that makes sense.* The butterfly chooses a plant that can provide the larvae with food. Once born, the tiny caterpillar starts eating and molts its skin often. *I wonder what the word "larvae" means. After reading before and after the word, it seems like the next sentence calls the "larvae" a "tiny caterpillar."* You might see pieces of skin coming off the larvae as it grows. Then, the larvae forms a pupa, or chrysalis. Inside the chrysalis, the pupa is growing into a butterfly. Finally, the chrysalis opens and a beautiful butterfly emerges to dry its wings and fly away. *I wonder if a pupa and a chrysalis are the same thing? It seems like the words are used close together and that they both mean the home where the butterfly grows.*

While conducting this think-aloud, the teacher is modeling which aspect of textual analysis?

- A. using context clues
- B. making inferences
- C. connecting with prior knowledge
- D. analyzing text features

Correct Answer: A. Throughout the text, the teacher models how to use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary words.

Question 10

A second-grade teacher recently read her class a story called "The Garden" from the book *Frog and Toad are Friends* by Arnold Lobel. The teacher is implementing a reading protocol where she has the students focus on a different aspect of the story each time she reads it aloud. During the first reading, the teacher has students focus on the sequence of events in the story.

While reading the story a second time, the teacher would like to focus on the differences between the two main characters, Frog and Toad. Specifically, the physical and character traits that make them each unique. To accomplish this goal, the teacher should have students:

- A. rewrite the story from the perspective of either Frog or Toad.
- B. record the major events of the story on a plot diagram.
- C. draw a picture of each main character based on the descriptions in the story.
- D. create a chart in which they compare the characterizations of Frog and Toad.

Correct Answer: D. Creating a chart would help students compare the physical and character traits of the two main characters in the story.

Domain IV:

Analysis and Response

Overview

The Analysis and Response domain consists of one constructed-response question, which accounts for about 20% of the entire exam.

The constructed-response question will center around the case study of an imaginary student. You will be presented with an overview of the student, a description of the skill being assessed, and exhibits that show the student's work and/or excerpts of student-teacher conversations. Using the information provided in the overview and exhibits, you will construct a 400-to-600-word response in which you:

- Identify one academic need for the student related to foundational reading skills.
- Describe an effective instructional strategy for the student's need related to foundational reading skills.
- Identify one academic need related to reading comprehension skills.
- Describe an effective instructional strategy for the student's need relating to reading comprehension.
- Explain why each strategy would be an effective method for addressing the student's academic needs.

Want more information on the constructed-response question? Check out this video.

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