

The Praxis® Study Companion

# Pennsylvania Grades 4–8 Subject Concentration: English Language Arts

5156



# Welcome to *The Praxis*® Study Companion

## Prepare to Show What You Know

You have been working to acquire the knowledge and skills you need for your teaching career. Now you are ready to demonstrate your abilities by taking a *Praxis*® test.

Using *The Praxis Series*® Study Companion is a smart way to prepare for the test so you can do your best on test day. This guide can help keep you on track and make the most efficient use of your study time.

The Study Companion contains practical information and helpful tools, including:

- An overview of the *Praxis* tests
- Specific information on the *Praxis* test you are taking
- A template study plan
- Study topics
- Practice questions and explanations of correct answers
- Test-taking tips and strategies
- Frequently asked questions
- Links to more detailed information

So where should you start? Begin by reviewing this guide in its entirety and note those sections that you need to revisit. Then you can create your own personalized study plan and schedule based on your individual needs and how much time you have before test day.

Keep in mind that study habits are individual. There are many different ways to successfully prepare for your test. Some people study better on their own, while others prefer a group dynamic. You may have more energy early in the day, but another test taker may concentrate better in the evening. So use this guide to develop the approach that works best for you.

Your teaching career begins with preparation. Good luck!

## Know What to Expect

### Which tests should I take?

Each state or agency that uses the *Praxis* tests sets its own requirements for which test or tests you must take for the teaching area you wish to pursue.

Before you register for a test, confirm your state or agency's testing requirements at [www.ets.org/praxis/states](http://www.ets.org/praxis/states).

### How are the *Praxis* tests given?

*Praxis* tests are given on computer. Other formats are available for test takers approved for accommodations (see page 34).

### **What should I expect when taking the test on computer?**

When taking the test on computer, you can expect to be asked to provide proper identification at the test center. Once admitted, you will be given the opportunity to learn how the computer interface works (how to answer questions, how to skip questions, how to go back to questions you skipped, etc.) before the testing time begins. Watch the [What to Expect on Test Day](#) video to see what the experience is like.

### **Where and when are the *Praxis* tests offered?**

You can select the test center that is most convenient for you. The *Praxis* tests are administered through an international network of test centers, which includes Prometric® Testing Centers, some universities, and other locations throughout the world.

Testing schedules may differ, so see the *Praxis* Web site for more detailed test registration information at [www.ets.org/praxis/register](http://www.ets.org/praxis/register).

# Table of Contents

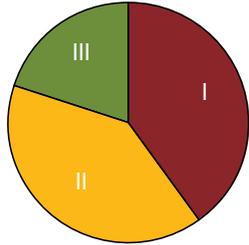
*The Praxis® Study Companion guides you through the steps to success*

<b>1. Learn About Your Test</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<i>Learn about the specific test you will be taking</i>	
<b>2. Familiarize Yourself with Test Questions</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<i>Become comfortable with the types of questions you'll find on the Praxis tests</i>	
<b>3. Practice with Sample Test Questions</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<i>Answer practice questions and find explanations for correct answers</i>	
<b>4. Determine Your Strategy for Success</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<i>Set clear goals and deadlines so your test preparation is focused and efficient</i>	
<b>5. Develop Your Study Plan</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<i>Develop a personalized study plan and schedule</i>	
<b>6. Review Study Topics</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<i>Review study topics with questions for discussion</i>	
<b>7. Review Smart Tips for Success</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<i>Follow test-taking tips developed by experts</i>	
<b>8. Check on Testing Accommodations</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<i>See if you qualify for accommodations that may make it easier to take the Praxis test</i>	
<b>9. Do Your Best on Test Day</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<i>Get ready for test day so you will be calm and confident</i>	
<b>10. Understand Your Scores</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<i>Understand how tests are scored and how to interpret your test scores</i>	
<b>Appendix: Other Questions You May Have</b> .....	<b>39</b>

# 1. Learn About Your Test

*Learn about the specific test you will be taking*

## Pennsylvania Grades 4–8 Subject Concentration: English Language Arts (5156)

Test at a Glance			
<b>Test Name</b>	Pennsylvania Grades 4-8 Subject Concentration: English Language Arts		
<b>Test Code</b>	5156		
<b>Time</b>	1 hour and 30 minutes		
<b>Number of Questions</b>	90		
<b>Format</b>	Selected-response questions		
<b>Test Delivery</b>	Computer delivered		
	<b>Content Categories</b>	<b>Approximate Number of Questions</b>	<b>Approximate Percentage of Examination</b>
	I. Reading	36	40%
	II. Writing	36	40%
	III. Media Literacy and Literacy Development	18	20%

### About This Test

The Pennsylvania Grades 4-8 Subject Concentration: English Language Arts test measures whether prospective Pennsylvania middle school English language arts teachers have the knowledge, skills, and abilities believed necessary for competent professional practice.

The test is aligned to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening for Grades 4-8 and is informed by the Teacher Preparation Program Guidelines from the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Framework for Grades 4-8. It measures examinees' skills and knowledge of concepts relevant to three categories: reading, including the study of literature (e.g., stories, drama, poetry) and informational texts (e.g., essays, biographies, speeches); writing; and media literacy and literacy development.

The test may contain some questions that will not count toward your score.

## Test Specifications

Test specifications in this chapter describe the knowledge and skills measured by the test. Study topics to help you prepare to answer test questions can be found in “6. Review Study Topics” on page 28.

### I. Reading

#### A. Reading Informational Text

1. Understands how to interpret informational text
  - a. comprehend the literal meaning of a passage
  - b. draw inferences from a passage
  - c. summarize and paraphrase the central idea(s) and supporting details within a passage
  - d. compare and contrast two or more texts
  - e. analyze how different organizational structures and purposes impact the meaning of a text
  - f. interpret text features (e.g., headings, charts, illustrations)
2. Understands the use of critical reasoning in informational text
  - a. differentiate between facts and opinions
  - b. identify biases, fallacies, stereotypes, and assumptions
  - c. explain how biases, fallacies, stereotypes, and assumptions can impact intended meaning
  - d. explain how propaganda techniques (e.g., circular arguments, emotional appeals, testimonials) support a particular point of view

### B. Reading Literature

1. Understands how to interpret literature
  - a. comprehend the literal meaning of a passage
  - b. draw inferences from a passage
  - c. summarize and paraphrase the central idea(s) and supporting details within a passage
  - d. identify theme(s) in a passage
  - e. compare and contrast two or more texts
  - f. analyze how literary elements (e.g., setting, plot, characterization) affect the meaning of a narrative text
2. Knows major literary genres and forms
  - a. identify the characteristics of major literary genres (e.g., poetry, fiction, drama)
  - b. identify the major differences among types of fiction and creative nonfiction (e.g., fable, short story, memoir)
3. Understands figurative language and other literary devices
  - a. identify the major types of figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, personification)
  - b. interpret figurative language used within a text
  - c. identify major literary devices (e.g., allusion, symbolism, imagery)
  - d. interpret literary devices used within a text

## II. Writing

### A. Types of Writing

1. Understands the use of different types of writing
  - a. describe and differentiate among the types of writing (e.g., narrative, expository, persuasive, reflective, informational, descriptive)
  - b. determine when to use each text type
2. Understands the author's purpose and the role of the audience
  - a. identify the author's or speaker's purpose
  - b. identify the intended audience of a work
  - c. evaluate whether a work is appropriate for the intended audience

### B. Quality of Writing

1. Understands the domain of organization
  - a. describe and differentiate types of organization within a paragraph and across paragraphs
  - b. describe the elements of cohesion (e.g., relationship of ideas, similar rhetorical features, appropriate transitions, maintenance of style)

2. Understands the domains of content and focus
  - a. identify a thesis statement within a text
  - b. identify evidence supporting the thesis within a text
  - c. evaluate a text's thesis and supporting evidence to ensure logical connections
3. Understands the domains of conventions and style (e.g., grammar, usage, mechanics)
  - a. identify and differentiate among sentence types (e.g., imperative, declarative)
  - b. identify and differentiate among sentence structures (e.g., simple, compound)
  - c. identify and differentiate among various types of phrases and clauses (e.g., independent clause, noun phrase)
  - d. apply standard use of capitalization and punctuation
  - e. identify and differentiate among various parts of speech, including modifiers
  - f. apply standard English usage (e.g., subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement, tense consistency)
  - g. maintain style through consistent use of tone and voice

### III. Media Literacy and Literacy Development

#### A. Media Literacy

1. Knows common research techniques
  - a. identify relevant information from multiple print and non-print (e.g., oral and digital) sources, using search terms effectively
  - b. determine the credibility and accuracy of source materials
  - c. differentiate between primary and secondary sources
  - d. apply appropriate documentation techniques when quoting or paraphrasing source material in order to avoid plagiarism
  - e. interpret a bibliographical citation
  - f. utilize effective note-taking techniques
2. Knows different aspects of media
  - a. evaluate media techniques
  - b. interpret visual, audio, and multimedia sources (e.g., Web pages, podcasts, film)

#### B. Literacy Development

1. Understands vocabulary acquisition and use
  - a. distinguish between connotation and denotation
  - b. differentiate among the use of context, the use of structural analysis, and the use of pre-reading to promote vocabulary development
  - c. determine the meanings of words through context or structural analysis
2. Knows the foundational principles of language acquisition and literacy development
  - a. recognize the influence of dialects on literacy and comprehension
  - b. identify the relationship among and the progression of foundational skills of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension
  - c. identify the relationship among and the progression of foundational skills of writing: spelling, vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, usage, syntax, semantics
  - d. recognize the developmental differences of students with special needs (including students in gifted programs) as related to literacy development
  - e. recognize the developmental differences of English language learners as related to literacy development
3. Understands individual and collaborative approaches to writing
  - a. describe the stages of the writing process (e.g., planning, drafting, editing) and how they work recursively
  - b. apply revision techniques
  - c. explain the relevance of collaboration (e.g., brainstorming, teacher conferences, peer review)

## 2. Familiarize Yourself with Test Questions

*Become comfortable with the types of questions you'll find on the Praxis tests*

The *Praxis Series* assessments include a variety of question types: constructed response (for which you write a response of your own); selected response, for which you select one or more answers from a list of choices or make another kind of selection (e.g., by clicking on a sentence in a text or by clicking on part of a graphic); and numeric entry, for which you enter a numeric value in an answer field. You may be familiar with these question formats from taking other standardized tests. If not, familiarize yourself with them so you don't spend time during the test figuring out how to answer them.

### Understanding Computer-Delivered Questions

Questions on computer-delivered tests are interactive in the sense that you answer by selecting an option or entering text on the screen. If you see a format you are not familiar with, read the directions carefully. The directions always give clear instructions on how you are expected to respond.

For most questions, you respond by clicking an oval to select a single answer from a list of options.

However, interactive question types may also ask you to respond by:

- **Clicking more than one oval** to select answers from a list of options.
- **Typing in an entry box.** When the answer is a number, you may be asked to enter a numerical answer. Some questions may have more than one place to enter a response.
- **Clicking check boxes.** You may be asked to click check boxes instead of an oval when more than one choice within a set of answers can be selected.
- **Clicking parts of a graphic.** In some questions, you will select your answers by clicking on a location (or locations) on a graphic such as a map or chart, as opposed to choosing your answer from a list.
- **Clicking on sentences.** In questions with reading passages, you may be asked to choose your answers by clicking on a sentence (or sentences) within the reading passage.
- **Dragging and dropping answer choices into targets on the screen.** You may be asked to select answers from a list of options and drag your answers to the appropriate location in a table, paragraph of text or graphic.
- **Selecting options from a drop-down menu.** You may be asked to choose answers by selecting options from a drop-down menu (e.g., to complete a sentence).

Remember that with every question you will get clear instructions.

Perhaps the best way to understand computer-delivered questions is to view the [Computer-delivered Testing Demonstration](#) on the Praxis Web site to learn how a computer-delivered test works and see examples of some types of questions you may encounter.

## Understanding Selected-Response Questions

Many selected-response questions begin with the phrase “which of the following.” Take a look at this example:

**Which of the following is a flavor made from beans?**

- (A) Strawberry
- (B) Cherry
- (C) Vanilla
- (D) Mint

### How would you answer this question?

All of the answer choices are flavors. Your job is to decide which of the flavors is the one made from beans.

Try following these steps to select the correct answer.

- 1) **Limit your answer to the choices given.** You may know that chocolate and coffee are also flavors made from beans, but they are not listed. Rather than thinking of other possible answers, focus only on the choices given (“which of the following”).
- 2) **Eliminate incorrect answers.** You may know that strawberry and cherry flavors are made from fruit and that mint flavor is made from a plant. That leaves vanilla as the only possible answer.
- 3) **Verify your answer.** You can substitute “vanilla” for the phrase “which of the following” and turn the question into this statement: “Vanilla is a flavor made from beans.” This will help you be sure that your answer is correct. If you’re still uncertain, try substituting the other choices to see if they make sense. You may want to use this technique as you answer selected-response questions on the practice tests.

### Try a more challenging example

The vanilla bean question is pretty straightforward, but you’ll find that more challenging questions have a similar structure. For example:

**Entries in outlines are generally arranged according to which of the following relationships of ideas?**

- (A) Literal and inferential
- (B) Concrete and abstract
- (C) Linear and recursive
- (D) Main and subordinate

You’ll notice that this example also contains the phrase “which of the following.” This phrase helps you determine that your answer will be a “relationship of ideas” from the choices provided. You are supposed to find the choice that describes how entries, or ideas, in outlines are related.

Sometimes it helps to put the question in your own words. Here, you could paraphrase the question in this way: “How are outlines usually organized?” Since the ideas in outlines usually appear as main ideas and subordinate ideas, the answer is (D).

**QUICK TIP:** Don't be intimidated by words you may not understand. It might be easy to be thrown by words like "recursive" or "inferential." Read carefully to understand the question and look for an answer that fits. An outline is something you are probably familiar with and expect to teach to your students. So slow down, and use what you know.

### Watch out for selected-response questions containing "NOT," "LEAST," and "EXCEPT"

This type of question asks you to select the choice that does not fit. You must be very careful because it is easy to forget that you are selecting the negative. This question type is used in situations in which there are several good solutions or ways to approach something, but also a clearly wrong way.

### How to approach questions about graphs, tables, or reading passages

When answering questions about graphs, tables, or reading passages, provide only the information that the questions ask for. In the case of a map or graph, you might want to read the questions first, and then look at the map or graph. In the case of a long reading passage, you might want to go ahead and read the passage first, noting places you think are important, and then answer the questions. Again, the important thing is to be sure you answer the questions as they refer to the material presented. So read the questions carefully.

### How to approach unfamiliar formats

New question formats are developed from time to time to find new ways of assessing knowledge. Tests may include audio and video components, such as a movie clip or animation, instead of a map or reading passage. Other tests may allow you to zoom in on details in a graphic or picture.

Tests may also include interactive questions. These questions take advantage of technology to assess knowledge and skills in ways that standard selected-response questions cannot. If you see a format you are not familiar with, **read the directions carefully**. The directions always give clear instructions on how you are expected to respond.

**QUICK TIP:** Don't make the questions more difficult than they are. Don't read for hidden meanings or tricks. There are no trick questions on *Praxis* tests. They are intended to be serious, straightforward tests of your knowledge.

## Understanding Constructed-Response Questions

Constructed-response questions require you to demonstrate your knowledge in a subject area by creating your own response to particular topics. Essays and short-answer questions are types of constructed-response questions.

For example, an essay question might present you with a topic and ask you to discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the opinion stated. You must support your position with specific reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

Take a look at a few sample essay topics:

- "Celebrities have a tremendous influence on the young, and for that reason, they have a responsibility to act as role models."
- "We are constantly bombarded by advertisements—on television and radio, in newspapers and magazines, on highway signs, and the sides of buses. They have become too pervasive. It's time to put limits on advertising."
- "Advances in computer technology have made the classroom unnecessary, since students and teachers are able to communicate with one another from computer terminals at home or at work."

### Keep these things in mind when you respond to a constructed-response question

- 1) **Answer the question accurately.** Analyze what each part of the question is asking you to do. If the question asks you to describe or discuss, you should provide more than just a list.
- 2) **Answer the question completely.** If a question asks you to do three distinct things in your response, you should cover all three things for the best score. Otherwise, no matter how well you write, you will not be awarded full credit.
- 3) **Answer the question that is asked.** Do not change the question or challenge the basis of the question. You will receive no credit or a low score if you answer another question or if you state, for example, that there is no possible answer.
- 4) **Give a thorough and detailed response.** You must demonstrate that you have a thorough understanding of the subject matter. However, your response should be straightforward and not filled with unnecessary information.
- 5) **Reread your response.** Check that you have written what you thought you wrote. Be sure not to leave sentences unfinished or omit clarifying information.

**QUICK TIP:** You may find that it helps to take notes on scratch paper so that you don't miss any details. Then you'll be sure to have all the information you need to answer the question.

For tests that have constructed-response questions, more detailed information can be found on page 5.

## 3. Practice with Sample Test Questions

*Answer practice questions and find explanations for correct answers*

### Sample Test Questions

*The sample questions that follow illustrate the kinds of questions on the test. They are not, however, representative of the entire scope of the test in either content or difficulty. Answers with explanations follow the questions.*

- An angel, robed in spotless white,  
Bent down and kissed the sleeping Night.  
Night woke to blush; the sprite was gone.  
Men saw the blush and called it Dawn.

—Paul Laurence Dunbar

The poem portrays “Night” using which of the following literary devices?

  - (A) Oxymoron
  - (B) Simile
  - (C) Allusion
  - (D) Personification
- \_\_\_\_\_ is a narrative that takes abstract ideas of behavior—good or bad, wise or foolish—and attempts to make them concrete and striking. The chief actor in these stories is usually an animal or inanimate object that behaves like a human and engages in a single significant act intended to teach a moral lesson.

Which of the following will correctly complete the passage above?

  - (A) A myth
  - (B) A fable
  - (C) An epic
  - (D) A legend
- Though Josh mentioned that she was a good friend, Anna knew it was a hollow compliment.

In the sentence above, the word “hollow” is best defined as

  - (A) deep
  - (B) sunken
  - (C) vicious
  - (D) insincere
- A teacher is working with an eighth-grade student who reads at the fifth-grade level. When the student encounters an unknown word, “cohabit,” the teacher breaks the word into parts and has the student determine the meaning of “co” and the meaning of “habit,” using words with the same prefix or root, such as “coworker” and “habitat.”

The activity described above relies most directly on knowledge of which of the following language concepts?

  - (A) Morphemes
  - (B) Synonyms
  - (C) Phonemes
  - (D) Orthography

**Questions 5-6** are based on the following passage.

How do we determine when a work should be classified as science fiction? While science fiction is nonrealistic fiction, it does not follow that all nonrealistic fiction can be usefully categorized as science fiction. Stories in which the protagonists travel from Earth to colonies on Mars by rocket ship are usually taken to be science fiction because no such colonies, and no such available mode of transport, are available to use today. But fairy tales, surreal fictions (such as Andre Breton's *Nadja*, 1928) or magic realism (like Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, 1981) all involve substantive differences between the world of the text and the world the readership actually lives in, and they are not categorized as science fiction.

5. The author of the passage mentions Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* most likely to
- (A) provide an example of a nonrealistic work that is not characterized as science fiction
  - (B) point out similarities between different works classified as science fiction
  - (C) argue that science fiction and surreal fiction concern similar subjects
  - (D) point out that not all science fiction works concern outer space and rocket ships
6. The passage is primarily concerned with
- (A) refuting an argument about a particular type of fiction
  - (B) considering the definition of a term
  - (C) offering an interpretation of a particular work
  - (D) contrasting two points of view about fiction
7. The following excerpt is from a speech by William Safire.
- Is the decline of the written word inevitable? Will the historians of the future deal merely in oral history? I hope not. I hope that oral history will limit itself to the discovery of toothpaste and the invention of mouthwash. I don't want to witness the decomposing of the art of composition, or be present when we get in touch with our feelings and lose contact with our minds.
- It can be inferred from the passage that the author believes that, in contrast to oral history, the written word is
- (A) able to convey emotions more accurately
  - (B) a more intellectual exercise
  - (C) doomed to describe mundane historical events
  - (D) already obsolete
8. If atoms are the letters of the chemical language, then molecules are the words. But in order to put the chemical letters together to form chemical words, we have to know something about the rules of chemical spelling.
- In the passage above, a discussion of atoms is introduced by
- (A) an analogy
  - (B) an aphorism
  - (C) an example
  - (D) a hypothesis

9. All of us find or invent our language. We may come up with new sentences never heard before. We may use words in a unique way. But we are always finding our voice, locating old patterns or long-heard expressions, reaching into our thesaurus for the right term. And in inventing English, we are always inventing ourselves—finding our place among the welter of the words or in the swell of sounds that is the ocean of our tongue.

Which of the following most accurately describes how the author's use of point of view works as a rhetorical strategy?

- (A) He speaks in the first person to invite the readers to see how they participate in the activities he describes.
- (B) He speaks in the first person to emphasize his unique experience with the subject under discussion.
- (C) He speaks in the third person to highlight the universality of the topic being discussed.
- (D) He speaks in the third person to construct a more authoritative position from which to argue his point.

**Questions 10–11** are based on the following passage.

Life is really something too, cause you can stand stark raving still and life will still happen to you. It's gonna spill over and touch you no matter where you are! Always full of lessons. Everywhere! All you got to do is look around you if you got sense enough to see! I hear people say they so bored with life. Ain't nothing but a fool that ain't got nothing to do in this here world. My Aunt Ellen, who I'm going to tell you about, always said, "Life is like trying to swim to the top of the rain sometime!"

10. The speaker quotes Aunt Ellen primarily in order to
- (A) suggest that Aunt Ellen was often bored with life
  - (B) emphasize the idea that life can be challenging
  - (C) justify Aunt Ellen's philosophy of life
  - (D) provide an example of life's lessons

11. Aunt Ellen describes life by using

- (A) a simile
- (B) an allusion
- (C) a euphemism
- (D) an anecdote

12. They set two rats in cages side by side, and one was furtive, timid, and small, and the other was glossy, bold, and big.

The sentence above is an example of a

- (A) simple sentence
- (B) compound sentence
- (C) complex sentence
- (D) compound-complex sentence

13. My sister and I always loved sledding down the hill behind our house.

The underlined word in the sentence above is an example of

- (A) a conjunction
- (B) a participle
- (C) a gerund
- (D) an adverb

14. Each of the following is an important part of guided reading EXCEPT:

- (A) The teacher should use texts that challenge students' current reading levels.
- (B) It is used to help students become independent readers.
- (C) It is used to help students learn various reading strategies.
- (D) Students are grouped homogeneously based on reading ability.

15. A teacher asks students to predict the outcome of a story. After students consider their predictions silently for one minute, they tell them to a partner. Then some students volunteer to describe their predictions to the class.
- During the activity, the students are using which of the following instructional strategies?
- (A) Anticipation guide
  - (B) Reciprocal teaching
  - (C) Shared reading
  - (D) Think-pair-share
16. Which of the following would be the most appropriate audience for a fifth-grade student's persuasive letter on why the school cafeteria should no longer sell junk food?
- (A) A group of cafeteria workers
  - (B) The student's classmates
  - (C) The student's family
  - (D) The school's principal and school board
17. A lesson on basic mechanics (grammar and spelling) would most likely be included in which of the following stages of the writing process?
- (A) Prewriting
  - (B) Drafting
  - (C) Revising
  - (D) Publishing
18. Which of the following pairs contains two words with similar denotations but different connotations?
- (A) inexpensive . . . cheap
  - (B) talkative . . . loquacious
  - (C) polite . . . courteous
  - (D) musical . . . harmonious

**Questions 19-21 refer to the following student draft.**

A seventh-grade class is learning how to respond to literary analysis prompts. The following is a student response to the prompt "Describe the significance of the White Rabbit in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, by Lewis Carroll."

- (1) The White Rabbit represents an adult who worries about schedules; he says, "Oh my ears and whiskers, how late it's getting!" (2) Alice wanders after the rabbit down the hole because, unknown to her, she wishes to not be a child anymore, she wants to be an adult. (3) When she follows the rabbit down the hole, she makes the choice to transform into an adult and leave her childish ways behind. (4) She begins her journey to Wonderland confused about all of her choices. (5) The author uses The White Rabbit as a metaphor to contrast with the childish ways Alice is leaving behind. (6) Her choices are like the choices she will have to make as she gets older.
19. Which of the following revisions will best improve the clarity of the response?
- (A) Switch sentence 1 and sentence 5
  - (B) Switch sentence 2 and sentence 3
  - (C) Switch sentence 4 and sentence 6
  - (D) Switch sentence 5 and sentence 6
20. In sentence 1, which of the following words or phrases, inserted before "he says," provides the best transition between the first clause and the quotation?
- (A) similarly,
  - (B) for instance,
  - (C) first of all,
  - (D) namely,
21. Which of the following errors is present in sentence 2?
- (A) Comma splice
  - (B) Faulty parallelism
  - (C) Incorrect subject-verb agreement
  - (D) Inconsistent verb tense

22. The following passage is from “Sonny’s Blues” by James Baldwin.

These boys . . . were growing up with a rush and their heads bumped abruptly against the low ceiling of their actual possibilities. They were filled with rage. All they really knew were two darkneses, the darkness of their lives, which was now closing in on them, and the darkness of the movies, which had blinded them to that other darkness, and in which they now, vindictively, dreamed, at once more together than they were at any other time, and more alone.

The author uses images of a “low ceiling” and “darkness” in order to portray life experiences that are

- (A) limitless
- (B) empty
- (C) restricted
- (D) fulfilling

23.

- I. The teacher from Nebraska displayed Native American artifacts to her class.
- II. The teacher displayed Native American artifacts from Nebraska to her class.

The meaning of sentence I differs from that of sentence II in that the

- (A) subject of sentence I is “teacher” whereas the subject of sentence II is “artifacts”
- (B) first sentence ends in a prepositional phrase whereas the second sentence does not
- (C) sentences do not have the same simple predicate
- (D) adjective phrase “from Nebraska” modifies different nouns

## Answers to Sample Questions

1. The correct answer is (D). Personification involves endowing abstractions, ideas, and inanimate objects with human characteristics or sensibilities. In the poem, "Night" is described as having the human abilities to sleep, wake, and blush. (A) is incorrect because an oxymoron is the combination of two words that appear to contradict each other. No words in the poem are paired in this manner. (B) is incorrect because a simile is a figure of speech comparing two unlike things, usually using the words "like" or "as." No comparisons of this type are made in the poem. (C) is incorrect because an allusion is a reference to a person, event, or other work of art outside the poem or literary piece. Although the poem references "Night" and "Dawn," these are not specific people, events, or works of art, so they are not allusions.

2. The correct answer is (B). The statements on which the question is based constitute a definition of a fable. While all of the choices are types of narratives, only a fable fits the full description.

3. The correct answer is (D). The use of the word "though" in the clause "Though Josh mentioned that she was a good friend" indicates that the compliment was not sincere. (A) is incorrect because describing a compliment as "deep" could indicate that the compliment was heartfelt and, therefore, would not logically follow the first clause. (B) is incorrect because "sunken" describes a physical state, which is not relevant to the sentence. (C) is incorrect because "vicious" is not a synonym for "hollow."

4. The correct answer is (A). Knowledge of morphemes is knowledge of the affixes, combining forms, and roots of words. This knowledge builds vocabulary, and it is necessary for the kind of word analysis described in the activity. Knowledge of synonyms (B) is helpful in vocabulary development, but it is not directly relevant to the activity described. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds, or phonemes (C), in spoken words. While knowledge of phonemes might be considered a prerequisite for vocabulary development, it is not the focus of the activity described. Orthographic knowledge (D) is the part of language study that deals with letters and spelling. It is not the focus of the activity described.

5. The correct answer is (A). The author of the passage explores the difference between works characterized as science fiction and other types of nonrealistic works. As an example of a work that is nonrealistic but not considered science fiction, the author mentions Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. (B) and (C) are incorrect because the author uses *Midnight's Children* to demonstrate the differences between works of nonrealistic fiction rather than similarities. (D) is incorrect because *Midnight's Children* is classified as magic realism, not science fiction, and the author does not discuss the specific content of the text.

6. The correct answer is (B). The author is primarily concerned with making a claim about the definition of science fiction. The author claims that while science fiction is nonrealistic fiction, not all nonrealistic fiction can be characterized as science fiction. The author expands on this claim by providing examples of characteristics often found in science fiction. (A) is incorrect because the author makes a claim but does not present or refute an opposing argument. (C) is incorrect because although several works are mentioned to support the claim, the author does not offer an interpretation of the works. (D) is incorrect because the author presents a single point of view about the definition of science fiction.

7. The correct answer is (B). In the final sentence of the passage, Safire suggests that if we stop engaging with the written word ("the art of composition"), we may also "lose contact with our minds," or miss out on the intellectual rewards of the written word. (A) is incorrect because the final sentence of the passage suggests that written composition is an intellectual exercise rather than an emotional one. (C) is incorrect because the author expresses the belief that oral, not written, history should "limit itself to" describing mundane events, such as the invention of mouthwash. (D) is incorrect because although the author considers the possibility that the written word may decline in the future, he does not suggest that it is already obsolete.

8. The correct answer is (A). By suggesting that atoms are like letters, the author of the passage has used an analogy; that is, the author has characterized one thing by reference to another thing that functions in a similar way. (B) is incorrect because an aphorism is a statement of truth revealed in a witty manner. (C) is incorrect because it is too vague to say that the discussion is introduced by an example. (D) is incorrect because a hypothesis is an educated guess about how things work.

9. The correct answer is (A). In first person point of view, the author or narrator writes from his or her own perspective. In this passage, the author uses the words “we” and “our” to suggest that his experience is similar to the readers’ experience, and invites readers to understand how people invent themselves through the words they use. (B) is incorrect because the author does not suggest that inventing language is unique to him as an author. (C) and (D) are incorrect because the third person point of view is not used in the passage.

10. The correct answer is (B). Aunt Ellen’s quote “Life is like trying to swim to the top of the rain sometime!” suggests that life can be difficult at times. Swimming to the top of the rain would be a challenging thing to do. (A) is incorrect because Aunt Ellen’s statement suggests that she finds life challenging rather than boring. (C) is incorrect because although the quote presents Aunt Ellen’s philosophy of life, the speaker does not defend or prove her philosophy. (D) is incorrect because the quote presents an observation about life rather than an example of a lesson learned.

11. The correct answer is (A). Aunt Ellen describes life through a comparison that uses the word “like”: “Life is like trying to swim to the top of the rain sometime!” A simile is a comparison that uses the words “like” or “as.” (B) is incorrect because an allusion is a reference to a person, event, or other work of art outside the literary piece, and Aunt Ellen’s statement does not contain this type of reference. (C) is incorrect because Aunt Ellen’s statement does not contain a euphemism, or a pleasant word or phrase in place of one that is unpleasant. (D) is incorrect because Aunt Ellen does not use a short story, or anecdote, to support her statement about life.

12. The correct answer is (B). A compound sentence is one that uses conjunctions to combine two or more independent clauses. The example sentence combines three independent clauses using the conjunction “and.” A simple sentence contains only one independent clause. The sentence does not have any dependent clauses, so it cannot be characterized as complex or compound-complex.

13. The correct answer is (C). In this sentence, the word “sledding” is a gerund, a verb form functioning as a noun. A conjunction (A) joins words or groups of words, and “sledding” does not function as a connecting word. A participle (B) is a verb form that is used as an adjective, and “sledding” is used as a noun. “Sledding” is not an adverb (D) because it does not modify a verb, adjective, or adverb.

14. The correct answer is (A). During guided reading, students are placed into small groups according to their individual reading levels. The teacher observes as students read and provides them with the opportunity to use various reading strategies. The ultimate goal of guided reading is to enable students to read successfully on their own. Thus, (B), (C), and (D) are all important parts of guided reading. (A) is not an important part because the teacher selects texts that students can read with 90 percent accuracy; it is not the intent of guided reading to select books that are beyond students’ current reading levels.

15. The correct answer is (D). Think-pair-share is a strategy that supports the development of listening and speaking skills—and, in this case, reading skills. The class is given a prompt or a question, and every student thinks of a response and discusses it with a partner. After partner discussion, some students may also share their responses with the class. An anticipation guide (A) is used before reading to activate students’ prior knowledge and build curiosity about a new topic. Reciprocal teaching (B) allows students to take turns acting as teachers in small-group reading sessions using four strategies: summarizing, question generating, clarifying, and predicting. Shared reading (C) is an interactive reading experience commonly used at the elementary level, in which the teacher models the strategies of proficient readers and asks students questions, usually while reading an enlarged text that all students can see.

16. The correct answer is (D). The purpose of the student’s persuasive letter is to effect change regarding the type of food sold in the school cafeteria. The school principal and school board would be the most appropriate audience for the letter because they would be best able, among the groups of people mentioned, to effect this type of change. The groups of people named in (A), (B), and (C) would have little to no power to make changes regarding cafeteria food; therefore, these answers are incorrect.

17. The correct answer is (C). It is most beneficial for students to pay close attention to grammar and spelling during the revising stage. (A) and (B) are incorrect because the goals of prewriting and drafting are to generate a plan for writing and to get ideas down on paper. Revision for grammar and spelling typically occurs after the drafting stage is complete. (D) is incorrect because grammar and spelling are addressed before writing reaches the publishing stage.

18. The correct answer is (A). “Inexpensive” and “cheap” have similar meanings, but “cheap” is often used in a derogatory manner. (B), (C), and (D) are incorrect because these word pairs all have similar connotations, or implied meanings.

19. The correct answer is (D). Sentence 6 is most appropriate after sentence 4 because it clarifies why Alice is confused about the choices she must make in Wonderland. Sentence 5 is an appropriate conclusion because it ties back to the thesis stated in sentence 1. (A) is incorrect because sentence 1 is most appropriate as the opening of the paragraph; it introduces the main idea of the response. Also, the quotation contained within sentence 1 would not make sense if placed in sentence 5’s current position. (B) is incorrect because these sentences contain similar information. Switching their placement would not contribute to overall clarity. (C) is incorrect because the fact that Alice is making choices in Wonderland must be introduced, as it is in sentence 4, before the nature of her choices can be discussed in more detail, as it is in sentence 6.

20. The correct answer is (B). “For instance” signals that the quotation illustrates the kind of worry described in the first clause. (A) is incorrect because it suggests that the quotation describes a similar but distinct behavior of the rabbit’s. (C) is incorrect because it suggests that the quotation is the beginning of a sequence, but there are no additional items in the sequence. (D) is incorrect because “namely” is typically used to restate an idea in more specific terms, not to provide an illustration of it.

21. The correct answer is (A). The comma between “anymore” and “she wants” is a comma splice; it is used incorrectly to separate two independent clauses. (B) and (C) are incorrect because there are no examples of faulty parallelism or incorrect subject-verb agreement in sentence 2. (D) is incorrect because all of the verbs used in sentence 2 are in the present tense.

22. The correct answer is (C). The boys bump against the “low ceiling of their actual possibilities,” suggesting that the actual possibilities in the boys’ lives have been restricted. Similarly, “the darkness of their lives” is “closing in on them,” or beginning to restrict the boys’ experiences and possibilities. (A) and (D) are incorrect because the imagery suggests that the boys’ life experiences have been negative rather than positive. (B) is incorrect because the author explains that the boys know only “two darknesses,” suggesting that their lives are restricted in scope but are not empty.

23. The correct answer is (D). The meaning of the two sentences differs because in sentence I the teacher is “from Nebraska” and in sentence II the Native American artifacts are “from Nebraska.” Thus, the placement of the adjective phrase “from Nebraska” after two different nouns changes the meaning of the sentences. (A) is incorrect because “teacher” is the subject of both sentences. (B) is incorrect because both sentences end in the prepositional phrase “to her class.” (C) is incorrect because the simple predicate of both sentences is “displayed.”

## 4. Determine Your Strategy for Success

*Set clear goals and deadlines so your test preparation is focused and efficient*

Effective *Praxis* test preparation doesn't just happen. You'll want to set clear goals and deadlines for yourself along the way. Otherwise, you may not feel ready and confident on test day.

### 1) Learn what the test covers.

You may have heard that there are several different versions of the same test. It's true. You may take one version of the test and your friend may take a different version a few months later. Each test has different questions covering the same subject area, but both versions of the test measure the same skills and content knowledge.

You'll find specific information on the test you're taking on page 5, which outlines the content categories that the test measures and what percentage of the test covers each topic. Visit [www.ets.org/praxis/testprep](http://www.ets.org/praxis/testprep) for information on other *Praxis* tests.

### 2) Assess how well you know the content.

Research shows that test takers tend to overestimate their preparedness—this is why some test takers assume they did well and then find out they did not pass.

The *Praxis* tests are demanding enough to require serious review of likely content, and the longer you've been away from the content, the more preparation you will most likely need. If it has been longer than a few months since you've studied your content area, make a concerted effort to prepare.

### 3) Collect study materials.

Gathering and organizing your materials for review are critical steps in preparing for the *Praxis* tests. Consider the following reference sources as you plan your study:

- Did you take a course in which the content area was covered? If yes, do you still have your books or your notes?
- Does your local library have a high school-level textbook in this area? Does your college library have a good introductory college-level textbook in this area?

Practice materials are available for purchase for many *Praxis* tests at [www.ets.org/praxis/testprep](http://www.ets.org/praxis/testprep). Test preparation materials include sample questions and answers with explanations.

### 4) Plan and organize your time.

You can begin to plan and organize your time while you are still collecting materials. Allow yourself plenty of review time to avoid cramming new material at the end. Here are a few tips:

- Choose a test date far enough in the future to leave you plenty of preparation time. Test dates can be found at [www.ets.org/praxis/register/centers\\_dates](http://www.ets.org/praxis/register/centers_dates).
- Work backward from that date to figure out how much time you will need for review.
- Set a realistic schedule—and stick to it.

### 5) Practice explaining the key concepts.

*Praxis* tests with constructed-response questions assess your ability to explain material effectively. As a teacher, you'll need to be able to explain concepts and processes to students in a clear, understandable way. What are the major concepts you will be required to teach? Can you explain them in your own words accurately, completely, and clearly? Practice explaining these concepts to test your ability to effectively explain what you know.

### 6) Understand how questions will be scored.

Scoring information can be found on page 37.

### 7) Develop a study plan.

A study plan provides a road map to prepare for the *Praxis* tests. It can help you understand what skills and knowledge are covered on the test and where to focus your attention. Use the study plan template on page 26 to organize your efforts.

And most important—get started!

## Would a Study Group Work for You?

### Using this guide as part of a study group

People who have a lot of studying to do sometimes find it helpful to form a study group with others who are working toward the same goal. Study groups give members opportunities to ask questions and get detailed answers. In a group, some members usually have a better understanding of certain topics, while others in the group may be better at other topics. As members take turns explaining concepts to one another, everyone builds self-confidence.

If the group encounters a question that none of the members can answer well, the group can go to a teacher or other expert and get answers efficiently. Because study groups schedule regular meetings, members study in a more disciplined fashion. They also gain emotional support. The group should be large enough so that multiple people can contribute different kinds of knowledge, but small enough so that it stays focused. Often, three to six members is a good size.

Here are some ways to use this guide as part of a study group:

- **Plan the group's study program.** Parts of the study plan template, beginning on page 26, can help to structure your group's study program. By filling out the first five columns and sharing the worksheets, everyone will learn more about your group's mix of abilities and about the resources, such as textbooks, that members can share with the group. In the sixth column ("Dates I will study the content"), you can create an overall schedule for your group's study program.
- **Plan individual group sessions.** At the end of each session, the group should decide what specific topics will be covered at the next meeting and who will present each topic. Use the topic headings and subheadings in the Test at a Glance table on page 5 to select topics, and then select practice questions, beginning on page 13.
- **Prepare your presentation for the group.** When it's your turn to present, prepare something that is more than a lecture. Write two or three original questions to pose to the group. Practicing writing actual questions can help you better understand the topics covered on the test as well as the types of questions you will encounter on the test. It will also give other members of the group extra practice at answering questions.

- **Take a practice test together.** The idea of a practice test is to simulate an actual administration of the test, so scheduling a test session with the group will add to the realism and may also help boost everyone's confidence. Remember, complete the practice test using only the time that will be allotted for that test on your administration day.
- **Learn from the results of the practice test.** Review the results of the practice test, including the number of questions answered correctly in each content category. For tests that contain constructed-response questions, look at the Sample Test Questions section, which also contain sample responses to those questions and shows how they were scored. Then try to follow the same guidelines that the test scorers use.
- **Be as critical as you can.** You're not doing your study partner(s) any favors by letting them get away with an answer that does not cover all parts of the question adequately.
- **Be specific.** Write comments that are as detailed as the comments about the sample responses. Indicate where and how your study partner(s) are doing an inadequate job of answering the question. Writing notes in the margins of the answer sheet may also help.
- **Be supportive.** Include comments that point out what your study partner(s) got right.

Then plan one or more study sessions based on aspects of the questions on which group members performed poorly. For example, each group member might be responsible for rewriting one paragraph of a response in which someone else did an inadequate job.

Whether you decide to study alone or with a group, remember that the best way to prepare is to have an organized plan. The plan should set goals based on specific topics and skills that you need to learn, and it should commit you to a realistic set of deadlines for meeting those goals. Then you need to discipline yourself to stick with your plan and accomplish your goals on schedule.

## 5. Develop Your Study Plan

### *Develop a personalized study plan and schedule*

Planning your study time is important because it will help ensure that you review all content areas covered on the test. Use the sample study plan below as a guide. It shows a plan for the *Core Academic Skills for Educators: Reading* test. Following that is a study plan template that you can fill out to create your own plan. Use the "Learn about Your Test" and "Test Specifications" information beginning on page 5 to help complete it.

#### Use this worksheet to:

1. **Define Content Areas:** List the most important content areas for your test as defined in chapter 1.
2. **Determine Strengths and Weaknesses:** Identify your strengths and weaknesses in each content area.
3. **Identify Resources:** Identify the books, courses, and other resources you plan to use for each content area.
4. **Study:** Create and commit to a schedule that provides for regular study periods.

**Praxis Test Name (Test Code):** Core Academic Skills for Educators: Reading (5712)

**Test Date:** 9/15/15

Content covered	Description of content	How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)	What resources do I have/need for the content?	Where can I find the resources I need?	Dates I will study the content	Date completed
<b>Key Ideas and Details</b>						
Close reading	Draw inferences and implications from the directly stated content of a reading selection	3	Middle school English textbook	College library, middle school teacher	7/15/15	7/15/15
Determining Ideas	Identify summaries or paraphrases of the main idea or primary purpose of a reading selection	3	Middle school English textbook	College library, middle school teacher	7/17/15	7/17/15
Determining Ideas	Identify summaries or paraphrases of the supporting ideas and specific details in a reading selection	3	Middle and high school English textbook	College library, middle and high school teachers	7/20/15	7/21/15
<b>Craft, Structure, and Language Skills</b>						
Interpreting tone	Determine the author's attitude toward material discussed in a reading selection	4	Middle and high school English textbook	College library, middle and high school teachers	7/25/15	7/26/15
Analysis of structure	Identify key transition words and phrases in a reading selection and how they are used	3	Middle and high school English textbook, dictionary	College library, middle and high school teachers	7/25/15	7/27/15
Analysis of structure	Identify how a reading selection is organized in terms of cause/effect, compare/contrast, problem/solution, etc.	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/15	8/1/15
Author's purpose	Determine the role that an idea, reference, or piece of information plays in an author's discussion or argument	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/15	8/1/15

(continued on next page)

Content covered	Description of content	How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)	What resources do I have/need for the content?	Where can I find the resources I need?	Dates I will study the content	Date completed
Language in different contexts	Determine whether information presented in a reading selection is presented as fact or opinion	4	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/15	8/1/15
Contextual meaning	Identify the meanings of words as they are used in the context of a reading selection	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/15	8/1/15
Figurative Language	Understand figurative language and nuances in word meanings	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/8/15	8/8/15
Vocabulary range	Understand a range of words and phrases sufficient for reading at the college and career readiness level	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/15/15	8/17/15
<b>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</b>						
Diverse media and formats	Analyze content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/22/15	8/24/15
Evaluation of arguments	Identify the relationship among ideas presented in a reading selection	4	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/24/15	8/24/15
Evaluation of arguments	Determine whether evidence strengthens, weakens, or is relevant to the arguments in a reading selection	3	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/27/15	8/27/15
Evaluation of arguments	Determine the logical assumptions upon which an argument or conclusion is based	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/28/15	8/30/15
Evaluation of arguments	Draw conclusions from material presented in a reading selection	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/30/15	8/31/15
Comparison of texts	Recognize or predict ideas or situations that are extensions of or similar to what has been presented in a reading selection	4	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	9/3/15	9/4/15
Comparison of texts	Apply ideas presented in a reading selection to other situations	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	9/5/15	9/6/15

## My Study Plan

Use this worksheet to:

1. **Define Content Areas:** List the most important content areas for your test as defined in chapter 1.
2. **Determine Strengths and Weaknesses:** Identify your strengths and weaknesses in each content area.
3. **Identify Resources:** Identify the books, courses, and other resources you plan to use for each content area.
4. **Study:** Create and commit to a schedule that provides for regular study periods.

Praxis Test Name (Test Code): \_\_\_\_\_

Test Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Content covered	Description of content	How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)	What resources do I have/need for this content?	Where can I find the resources I need?	Dates I will study this content	Date completed

(continued on next page)



## 6. Review Study Topics

*Review study topics with questions for discussion*

### Using the Study Topics That Follow

The Pennsylvania Grades 4-8 Subject Concentration: English Language Arts test is designed to measure the knowledge and skills necessary for a beginning teacher.

This chapter is intended to help you organize your preparation for the test and to give you a clear indication of the depth and breadth of the knowledge required for success on the test.

Virtually all accredited programs address the topics covered by the test; however, you are not expected to be an expert on all aspects of the topics that follow.

You are likely to find that the topics below are covered by most introductory textbooks. Consult materials and resources, including lecture and laboratory notes, from all your coursework. You should be able to match up specific topics and subtopics with what you have covered in your courses.

Try not to be overwhelmed by the volume and scope of content knowledge in this guide. Although a specific term may not seem familiar as you see it here, you might find you can understand it when applied to a real-life situation. Many of the items on the actual test will provide you with a context to apply to these topics or terms.

### Discussion Areas

Interspersed throughout the study topics are discussion areas, presented as open-ended questions or statements. These discussion areas are intended to help test your knowledge of fundamental concepts and your ability to apply those concepts to situations in the classroom or the real world. Most of the areas require you to combine several pieces of knowledge to formulate an integrated understanding and response. If you spend time on these areas, you will gain increased understanding and facility with the subject matter covered on the test. You may want to discuss these areas and your answers with a teacher or mentor.

Note that this study companion *does not provide answers for the discussion area questions*, but thinking about the answers to them will help improve your understanding of fundamental concepts and will probably help you answer a broad range of questions on the test.

## Study Topics

An overview of the areas covered on the test, along with their subareas, follows.

### I. Reading

#### A. Reading Informational Text

1. Understands how to interpret informational text
  - a. comprehend the literal meaning of a passage
  - b. draw inferences from a passage
  - c. summarize and paraphrase the central idea(s) and supporting details within a passage
  - d. compare and contrast two or more texts
  - e. analyze how different organizational structures and purposes impact the meaning of a text
  - f. interpret text features (e.g., headings, charts, illustrations)
2. Understands the use of critical reasoning in informational text
  - a. differentiate between facts and opinions
  - b. identify biases, fallacies, stereotypes, and assumptions
  - c. explain how biases, fallacies, stereotypes, and assumptions can impact intended meaning
  - d. explain how propaganda techniques (e.g., circular arguments, emotional appeals, testimonials) support a particular point of view

#### B. Reading Literature

1. Understands how to interpret literature
  - a. comprehend the literal meaning of a passage
  - b. draw inferences from a passage
  - c. summarize and paraphrase the central idea(s) and supporting details within a passage
  - d. identify theme(s) in a passage
  - e. compare and contrast two or more texts
  - f. analyze how literary elements (e.g., setting, plot, characterization) affect the meaning of a narrative text

2. Knows major literary genres and forms
  - a. identify the characteristics of major literary genres (e.g., poetry, fiction, drama)
  - b. identify the major differences among types of fiction and creative nonfiction (e.g., fable, short story, memoir)
3. Understands figurative language and other literary devices
  - a. identify the major types of figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, personification)
  - b. interpret figurative language used within a text
  - c. identify major literary devices (e.g., allusion, symbolism, imagery)
  - d. interpret literary devices used within a text

#### Discussion areas: Reading

- Choose an informational text that you might teach in Grades 4-8, such as an excerpt from a biography or a newspaper article. Summarize the excerpt and analyze its organizational structure and text features.
- Analyze the persuasive techniques used in a magazine advertisement. Do any of the techniques rely on a logical flaw?
- Choose a short work of literature that you might teach in Grades 4–8, such as a short story or a poem. Identify one theme of the work and several inferences you might draw about its characters or plot.
- Review and identify examples of the major forms of fiction and creative nonfiction.
- Identify definitions and examples of each of the major types of figurative language and major literary devices.

## II. Writing

### A. Types of Writing

1. Understands the use of different types of writing
  - a. describe and differentiate among the types of writing (e.g., narrative, expository, persuasive, reflective, informational, descriptive)
  - b. determine when to use each text type
2. Understands the author's purpose and the role of the audience
  - a. identify the author's or speaker's purpose
  - b. identify the intended audience of a work
  - c. evaluate whether a work is appropriate for the intended audience

### B. Quality of Writing

1. Understands the domain of organization
  - a. describe and differentiate types of organization within a paragraph and across paragraphs
  - b. describe the elements of cohesion (e.g., relationship of ideas, similar rhetorical features, appropriate transitions, maintenance of style)
2. Understands the domains of content and focus
  - a. identify a thesis statement within a text
  - b. identify evidence supporting the thesis within a text
  - c. evaluate a text's thesis and supporting evidence to ensure logical connections
3. Understands the domains of conventions and style (e.g., grammar, usage, mechanics)
  - a. identify and differentiate among sentence types (e.g., imperative, declarative)
  - b. identify and differentiate among sentence structures (e.g., simple, compound)
  - c. identify and differentiate among various types of phrases and clauses (e.g., independent clause, noun phrase)
  - d. apply standard use of capitalization and punctuation

- e. identify and differentiate among various parts of speech, including modifiers
- f. apply standard English usage (e.g., subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement, tense consistency)
- g. maintain style through consistent use of tone and voice

### Discussion areas: Writing

- Analyze how the purpose or intended audience for a piece of writing shapes its form.
- Select several essays from books or journals and identify the author's main idea. Think about the ways in which the authors of these essays support their arguments.
- List ten of the most common errors that middle school students make in grammar and sentence structure, and provide an example of each.

### III. Media Literacy and Literacy Development

#### A. Media Literacy

1. Knows common research techniques
  - a. identify relevant information from multiple print and non-print (e.g., oral and digital) sources, using search terms effectively
  - b. determine the credibility and accuracy of source materials
  - c. differentiate between primary and secondary sources
  - d. apply appropriate documentation techniques when quoting or paraphrasing source material in order to avoid plagiarism
  - e. interpret a bibliographical citation
  - f. utilize effective note-taking techniques
2. Knows different aspects of media
  - a. evaluate media techniques
  - b. interpret visual, audio, and multimedia sources (e.g., Web pages, podcasts, film)
3. Understands individual and collaborative approaches to writing
  - a. describe the stages of the writing process (e.g., planning, drafting, editing) and how they work recursively
  - b. apply revision techniques
  - c. explain the relevance of collaboration (e.g., brainstorming, teacher conferences, peer review)

#### B. Literacy Development

1. Understands vocabulary acquisition and use
  - a. distinguish between connotation and denotation
  - b. differentiate among the use of context, the use of structural analysis, and the use of pre-reading to promote vocabulary development
  - c. determine the meanings of words through context or structural analysis
2. Knows the foundational principles of language acquisition and literacy development
  - a. recognize the influence of dialects on literacy and comprehension
  - b. identify the relationship among and the progression of foundational skills of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension
  - c. identify the relationship among and the progression of foundational skills of writing: spelling, vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, usage, syntax, semantics

#### Discussion areas: Media Literacy and Literacy Development

- Conduct a quick Web search on a topic of interest, and explain how you would determine the credibility and accuracy of the information you find.
- Explain how meaning is affected by word order in a sentence.
- Describe some common challenges of 4th-grade readers and identify several research-supported strategies for addressing those challenges.
- Identify some common challenges for student writers at the middle school level, and explain how you might address them during one or more stages of the writing process.

## 7. Review Smart Tips for Success

### *Follow test-taking tips developed by experts*

Learn from the experts. Take advantage of the following answers to questions you may have and practical tips to help you navigate the *Praxis* test and make the best use of your time.

#### **Should I Guess?**

Yes. Your score is based on the number of questions you answer correctly, with no penalty or subtraction for an incorrect answer. When you don't know the answer to a question, try to eliminate any obviously wrong answers and then guess at the correct one. Try to pace yourself so that you have enough time to carefully consider every question.

#### **Can I answer the questions in any order?**

You can answer the questions in order or skip questions and come back to them later. If you skip a question, you can also mark it so that you can remember to return and answer it later. Remember that questions left unanswered are treated the same as questions answered incorrectly, so it is to your advantage to answer every question.

#### **Are there trick questions on the test?**

No. There are no hidden meanings or trick questions. All of the questions on the test ask about subject matter knowledge in a straightforward manner.

#### **Are there answer patterns on the test?**

No. You might have heard this myth: the answers on tests follow patterns. Another myth is that there will never be more than two questions in a row with the correct answer in the same position among the choices. Neither myth is true. Select the answer you think is correct based on your knowledge of the subject.

#### **Can I write on the scratch paper I am given?**

Yes. You can work out problems on the scratch paper, make notes to yourself, or write anything at all. Your scratch paper will be destroyed after you are finished with it, so use it in any way that is helpful to you. But make sure to select or enter your answers on the computer.

### **Smart Tips for Taking the Test**

- 1. Skip the questions you find extremely difficult.** Rather than trying to answer these on your first pass through the test, you may want to leave them blank and mark them so that you can return to them later. Pay attention to the time as you answer the rest of the questions on the test, and try to finish with 10 or 15 minutes remaining so that you can go back over the questions you left blank. Even if you don't know the answer the second time you read the questions, see if you can narrow down the possible answers, and then guess. Your score is based on the number of right answers, so it is to your advantage to answer every question.

2. **Keep track of the time.** The on-screen clock will tell you how much time you have left. You will probably have plenty of time to answer all of the questions, but if you find yourself becoming bogged down, you might decide to move on and come back to any unanswered questions later.
3. **Read all of the possible answers before selecting one.** For questions that require you to select more than one answer, or to make another kind of selection, consider the most likely answers given what the question is asking. Then reread the question to be sure the answer(s) you have given really answer the question. Remember, a question that contains a phrase such as “Which of the following does NOT . . .” is asking for the one answer that is NOT a correct statement or conclusion.
4. **Check your answers.** If you have extra time left over at the end of the test, look over each question and make sure that you have answered it as you intended. Many test takers make careless mistakes that they could have corrected if they had checked their answers.
5. **Don’t worry about your score when you are taking the test.** No one is expected to answer all of the questions correctly. Your score on this test is not analogous to your score on the *GRE*<sup>®</sup> or other tests. It doesn’t matter on the *Praxis* tests whether you score very high or barely pass. If you meet the minimum passing scores for your state and you meet the state’s other requirements for obtaining a teaching license, you will receive a license. In other words, what matters is meeting the minimum passing score. You can find passing scores for all states that use *The Praxis Series* tests at [http://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/passing\\_scores.pdf](http://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/passing_scores.pdf) or on the Web site of the state for which you are seeking certification/licensure.
6. **Use your energy to take the test, not to get frustrated by it.** Getting frustrated only increases stress and decreases the likelihood that you will do your best. Highly qualified educators and test development professionals, all with backgrounds in teaching, worked diligently to make the test a fair and valid measure of your knowledge and skills. Your state painstakingly reviewed the test before adopting it as a licensure requirement. The best thing to do is concentrate on answering the questions.

## 8. Check on Testing Accommodations

*See if you qualify for accommodations that may make it easier to take the Praxis test*

### What if English is not my primary language?

*Praxis* tests are given only in English. If your primary language is not English (PLNE), you may be eligible for extended testing time. For more details, visit [www.ets.org/praxis/register/accommodations/plne](http://www.ets.org/praxis/register/accommodations/plne).

### What if I have a disability or other health-related need?

The following accommodations are available for *Praxis* test takers who meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Amendments Act disability requirements:

- Extended testing time
- Additional rest breaks
- Separate testing room
- Writer/recorder of answers
- Test reader
- Sign language interpreter for spoken directions only
- Perkins Braille
- Braille slate and stylus
- Printed copy of spoken directions
- Oral interpreter
- Audio test
- Braille test
- Large print test book
- Large print answer sheet
- Listening section omitted

For more information on these accommodations, visit [www.ets.org/praxis/register/disabilities](http://www.ets.org/praxis/register/disabilities).

**Note:** Test takers who have health-related needs requiring them to bring equipment, beverages, or snacks into the testing room or to take extra or extended breaks must request these accommodations by following the procedures described in the *Bulletin Supplement for Test Takers with Disabilities or Health-Related Needs* (PDF), which can be found at [http://www.ets.org/s/disabilities/pdf/bulletin\\_supplement\\_test\\_takers\\_with\\_disabilities\\_health\\_needs.pdf](http://www.ets.org/s/disabilities/pdf/bulletin_supplement_test_takers_with_disabilities_health_needs.pdf).

You can find additional information on available resources for test takers with disabilities or health-related needs at [www.ets.org/disabilities](http://www.ets.org/disabilities).

## 9. Do Your Best on Test Day

*Get ready for test day so you will be calm and confident*

You followed your study plan. You prepared for the test. Now it's time to prepare for test day.

Plan to end your review a day or two before the actual test date so you avoid cramming. Take a dry run to the test center so you're sure of the route, traffic conditions, and parking. Most of all, you want to eliminate any unexpected factors that could distract you from your ultimate goal—passing the *Praxis* test!

On the day of the test, you should:

- be well rested
- wear comfortable clothes and dress in layers
- eat before you take the test
- bring an acceptable and valid photo identification with you
- bring an approved calculator only if one is specifically permitted for the test you are taking (see Calculator Use, at [http://www.ets.org/praxis/test\\_day/policies/calculators](http://www.ets.org/praxis/test_day/policies/calculators))
- be prepared to stand in line to check in or to wait while other test takers check in

You can't control the testing situation, but you can control yourself. Stay calm. The supervisors are well trained and make every effort to provide uniform testing conditions, but don't let it bother you if the test doesn't start exactly on time. You will have the allotted amount of time once it does start.

You can think of preparing for this test as training for an athletic event. Once you've trained, prepared, and rested, give it everything you've got.

### What items am I restricted from bringing into the test center?

You cannot bring into the test center personal items such as:

- handbags, knapsacks, or briefcases
- water bottles or canned or bottled beverages
- study materials, books, or notes
- pens, pencils, scrap paper, or calculators, unless specifically permitted for the test you are taking (see Calculator Use, at [http://www.ets.org/praxis/test\\_day/policies/calculators](http://www.ets.org/praxis/test_day/policies/calculators))
- any electronic, photographic, recording, or listening devices

Personal items are not allowed in the testing room and will not be available to you during the test or during breaks. You may also be asked to empty your pockets. At some centers, you will be assigned a space to store your belongings, such as handbags and study materials. Some centers do not have secure storage space available, so please plan accordingly.

Test centers assume no responsibility for your personal items.

If you have health-related needs requiring you to bring equipment, beverages or snacks into the testing room or to take extra or extended breaks, you need to request accommodations in advance. Procedures for requesting accommodations are described in the [Bulletin Supplement for Test Takers with Disabilities or Health-related Needs \(PDF\)](#).

**Note:** All cell phones, smart phones (e.g., Android® devices, iPhones®, etc.), and other electronic, photographic, recording, or listening devices are strictly prohibited from the test center. If you are seen with such a device, you will be dismissed from the test, your test scores will be canceled, and you will forfeit your test fees. If you are seen *using* such a device, the device will be confiscated and inspected. For more information on what you can bring to the test center, visit [www.ets.org/praxis/test\\_day/bring](http://www.ets.org/praxis/test_day/bring).

### Are You Ready?

Complete this checklist to determine whether you are ready to take your test.

- Do you know the testing requirements for the license or certification you are seeking in the state(s) where you plan to teach?
- Have you followed all of the test registration procedures?
- Do you know the topics that will be covered in each test you plan to take?
- Have you reviewed any textbooks, class notes, and course readings that relate to the topics covered?
- Do you know how long the test will take and the number of questions it contains?
- Have you considered how you will pace your work?
- Are you familiar with the types of questions for your test?
- Are you familiar with the recommended test-taking strategies?
- Have you practiced by working through the practice questions in this study companion or in a study guide or practice test?
- If constructed-response questions are part of your test, do you understand the scoring criteria for these questions?
- If you are repeating a *Praxis* test, have you analyzed your previous score report to determine areas where additional study and test preparation could be useful?

If you answered “yes” to the questions above, your preparation has paid off. Now take the *Praxis* test, do your best, pass it—and begin your teaching career!

# 10. Understand Your Scores

*Understand how tests are scored and how to interpret your test scores*

Of course, passing the *Praxis* test is important to you so you need to understand what your scores mean and what your state requirements are.

## What are the score requirements for my state?

States, institutions, and associations that require the tests set their own passing scores. Visit [www.ets.org/praxis/states](http://www.ets.org/praxis/states) for the most up-to-date information.

## If I move to another state, will my new state accept my scores?

The *Praxis Series* tests are part of a national testing program, meaning that they are required in many states for licensure. The advantage of a national program is that if you move to another state that also requires *Praxis* tests, you can transfer your scores. Each state has specific test requirements and passing scores, which you can find at [www.ets.org/praxis/states](http://www.ets.org/praxis/states).

## How do I know whether I passed the test?

Your score report will include information on passing scores for the states you identified as recipients of your test results. If you test in a state with automatic score reporting, you will also receive passing score information for that state.

A list of states and their passing scores for each test are available online at [www.ets.org/praxis/states](http://www.ets.org/praxis/states).

## What your *Praxis* scores mean

You received your score report. Now what does it mean? It's important to interpret your score report correctly and to know what to do if you have questions about your scores.

Visit [http://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/sample\\_score\\_report.pdf](http://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/sample_score_report.pdf) to see a sample score report.

To access *Understanding Your Praxis Scores*, a document that provides additional information on how to read your score report, visit [www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand](http://www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand).

## Put your scores in perspective

Your score report indicates:

- Your score and whether you passed
- The range of possible scores
- The raw points available in each content category
- The range of the middle 50 percent of scores on the test

If you have taken the same test or other tests in *The Praxis Series* over the last 10 years, your score report also lists the highest score you earned on each test taken.

## Content category scores and score interpretation

Questions on the *Praxis* tests are categorized by content. To help you in future study or in preparing to retake the test, your score report shows how many raw points you earned in each content category. Compare your “raw points earned” with the maximum points you could have earned (“raw points available”). The greater the difference, the greater the opportunity to improve your score by further study.

## Score scale changes

ETS updates *Praxis* tests on a regular basis to ensure they accurately measure the knowledge and skills that are required for licensure. When tests are updated, the meaning of the score scale may change, so requirements may vary between the new and previous versions. All scores for previous, discontinued tests are valid and reportable for 10 years, provided that your state or licensing agency still accepts them.

These resources may also help you interpret your scores:

- *Understanding Your Praxis Scores* (PDF), found at [www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand](http://www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand)
- *The Praxis Series Passing Scores* (PDF), found at [www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand](http://www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand)
- State requirements, found at [www.ets.org/praxis/states](http://www.ets.org/praxis/states)

# Appendix: Other Questions You May Have

Here is some supplemental information that can give you a better understanding of the *Praxis* tests.

## What do the *Praxis* tests measure?

The *Praxis* tests measure the specific knowledge and skills that beginning teachers need. The tests do not measure an individual's disposition toward teaching or potential for success, nor do they measure your actual teaching ability. The assessments are designed to be comprehensive and inclusive but are limited to what can be covered in a finite number of questions and question types. Teaching requires many complex skills that are typically measured in other ways, including classroom observation, video recordings, and portfolios.

Ranging from Agriculture to World Languages, there are more than 80 *Praxis* tests, which contain selected-response questions or constructed-response questions, or a combination of both.

## Who takes the tests and why?

Some colleges and universities use the *Praxis* Core Academic Skills for Educators tests (Reading, Writing, and Mathematics) to evaluate individuals for entry into teacher education programs. The assessments are generally taken early in your college career. Many states also require Core Academic Skills test scores as part of their teacher licensing process.

Individuals entering the teaching profession take the *Praxis* content and pedagogy tests as part of the teacher licensing and certification process required by many states. In addition, some professional associations and organizations require the *Praxis* Subject Assessments (formerly the *Praxis II*® tests) for professional licensing.

## Do all states require these tests?

The *Praxis Series* tests are currently required for teacher licensure in approximately 40 states and United States territories. These tests are also used by several professional licensing agencies and by several hundred colleges and universities. Teacher candidates can test in one state and submit their scores in any other state that requires *Praxis* testing for licensure. You can find details at [www.ets.org/praxis/states](http://www.ets.org/praxis/states).

## What is licensure/certification?

Licensure in any area—medicine, law, architecture, accounting, cosmetology—is an assurance to the public that the person holding the license possesses sufficient knowledge and skills to perform important occupational activities safely and effectively. In the case of teacher licensing, a license tells the public that the individual has met predefined competency standards for beginning teaching practice.

Because a license makes such a serious claim about its holder, licensure tests are usually quite demanding. In some fields, licensure tests have more than one part and last for more than one day. Candidates for licensure in all fields plan intensive study as part of their professional preparation. Some join study groups, others study alone. But preparing to take a licensure test is, in all cases, a professional activity. Because a licensure exam surveys a broad body of knowledge, preparing for a licensure exam takes planning, discipline, and sustained effort.

## Why does my state require *The Praxis Series* tests?

Your state chose *The Praxis Series* tests because they assess the breadth and depth of content—called the “domain”—that your state wants its teachers to possess before they begin to teach. The level of content knowledge, reflected in the passing score, is based on recommendations of panels of teachers and teacher

educators in each subject area. The state licensing agency and, in some states, the state legislature ratify the passing scores that have been recommended by panels of teachers.

### How were the tests developed?

ETS consulted with practicing teachers and teacher educators around the country during every step of *The Praxis Series* test development process. First, ETS asked them which knowledge and skills a beginning teacher needs to be effective. Their responses were then ranked in order of importance and reviewed by hundreds of teachers.

After the results were analyzed and consensus was reached, guidelines, or specifications, for the selected-response and constructed-response tests were developed by teachers and teacher educators. Following these guidelines, teachers and professional test developers created test questions that met content requirements and [\*ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness\*](#).\*

When your state adopted the research-based *Praxis* tests, local panels of teachers and teacher educators evaluated each question for its relevance to beginning teachers in your state. During this “validity study,” the panel also provided a passing-score recommendation based on how many of the test questions a beginning teacher in your state would be able to answer correctly. Your state’s licensing agency determined the final passing-score requirement.

ETS follows well-established industry procedures and standards designed to ensure that the tests measure what they are intended to measure. When you pass the *Praxis* tests your state requires, you are proving that you have the knowledge and skills you need to begin your teaching career.

### How are the tests updated to ensure the content remains current?

*Praxis* tests are reviewed regularly. During the first phase of review, ETS conducts an analysis of relevant state and association standards and of the current test content. State licensure titles and the results of relevant job analyses are also considered. Revised test questions are then produced following the standard test development methodology. National advisory committees may also be convened to review and revise existing test specifications and to evaluate test forms for alignment with the specifications.

### How long will it take to receive my scores?

Scores for tests that do not include constructed response questions are available on screen immediately after the test. Scores for tests that contain constructed-response questions or essays aren’t available immediately after the test because of the scoring process involved. Official score reports are available to you and your designated score recipients approximately two to three weeks after the test date for tests delivered continuously, or two to three weeks after the testing window closes for other tests. See the test dates and deadlines calendar at [www.ets.org/praxis/register/centers\\_dates](http://www.ets.org/praxis/register/centers_dates) for exact score reporting dates.

### Can I access my scores on the Web?

All test takers can access their test scores via My *Praxis* Account free of charge for one year from the posting date. This online access replaces the mailing of a paper score report.

The process is easy—simply log into My *Praxis* Account at [www.ets.org/praxis](http://www.ets.org/praxis) and click on your score report. If you do not already have a *Praxis* account, you must create one to view your scores.

**Note:** You must create a *Praxis* account to access your scores, even if you registered by mail or phone.

\*[\*ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness\*](#) (2014, Princeton, N.J.) are consistent with the “[\*Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing\*](#),” industry standards issued jointly by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education (2014, Washington, D.C.).

Your teaching career is worth preparing for, so start today!  
Let the *Praxis*® *Study Companion* guide you.



To search for the *Praxis* test prep resources  
that meet your specific needs, visit:

[www.ets.org/praxis/testprep](http://www.ets.org/praxis/testprep)

To purchase official test prep made by the creators  
of the *Praxis* tests, visit the ETS Store:

[www.ets.org/praxis/store](http://www.ets.org/praxis/store)

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