

Reading Specialist (0300)

Test at a Glance

Test Name	Reading Specialist		
Test Code	0300		
Time	2 hours		
Number of Questions	120		
Format	Multiple-choice questions		
	Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of Questions
	I. Theoretical & Knowledge Bases of Reading	22	18%
	II. Application of Theoretical & Knowledge Bases of Reading in Instruction	54	45%
	III. Application of Theoretical & Knowledge Bases of Reading in Diagnosis & Assessment	32	27%
	IV. Reading Leadership	12	10%

About This Test

The Reading Specialist test is intended primarily for persons who have advanced academic preparation and/or who are being considered for supervisory or instructional positions related to the teaching of reading instruction in grade K–12. The test is most appropriate for candidates with advanced preparation (i.e., those with a master’s degree or course work comparable to the training needed for a master’s degree) who expect to have specialized responsibilities related to the teaching of reading at any level from kindergarten through twelfth grade. It is also appropriate for individuals who wish to be considered for supervisory or instructional positions related to the teaching of reading; those seeking positions as reading clinicians, consultants, supervisors, specialists, coordinators, or resource persons and thus intending to be responsible for more than the teaching of developmental reading in a regular classroom setting.

The 120 multiple-choice questions cover both knowledge of relevant facts and the ability to analyze problems and apply principles to reading literacy instruction. The test content covers the theoretical and knowledge bases of reading, the application of theoretical and knowledge bases of reading, the application of theoretical and knowledge bases of reading in instruction, the application of theoretical and knowledge bases of reading in diagnosis and assessment, and reading leadership. As much as possible, the test questions involve the evaluation and application of ideas and practices to reading literacy instruction, as opposed to the recall of factual material.

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

Topics Covered

Representative descriptions of topics covered in each category are provided below.

I. Theoretical and Knowledge Bases of Reading

- Demonstrate an understanding of the social, linguistic, and cultural influences on language and literacy learning
- Demonstrate knowledge of experiences that support different stages of literacy development
- Demonstrate an understanding of the relationships among reading, writing, speaking, and listening
- Demonstrate knowledge of the role of phonemic awareness (e.g., rhyming, segmenting, blending sounds) and the alphabetic principle in reading acquisition
- Demonstrate knowledge of the role of the reader's prior knowledge, of the reader's social/cultural/linguistic background, and of the role of social interaction in constructing meaning
- Demonstrate knowledge of the role of fluency in constructing meaning
- Demonstrate an understanding of the functions of orthography, morphology, syntax, semantic systems, and genre patterns, and recognition of the influences of purpose, context, and genre in constructing meaning

II. Application of Theoretical and Knowledge Bases of Reading in Instruction

- Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between reading and writing instruction and of how writing and reading support each other at different developmental levels
- Demonstrate knowledge of how to construct instructional plans in which assessment, goals, instruction, and reassessment are connected and continuous
- Demonstrate knowledge of explicit instructional strategies to teach students how to monitor their own word identification strategies, comprehension, and comprehension strategies
- Demonstrate knowledge of instructional approaches to foster higher-order, critical, reflective thinking about text

- Demonstrate an understanding of different decoding strategies and of instructional approaches to teach students how to use them
- Demonstrate an understanding of the instruction of comprehension strategies, including modeling when and how to orchestrate multiple comprehension strategies and their scaffolding
- Demonstrate knowledge of explicit instruction and scaffolding for learning study skills and strategies (e.g., note taking and test taking)
- Demonstrate knowledge of how to evaluate the level of text difficulty and appropriateness of reading materials and programs for a variety of instructional purposes and learning situations
- Demonstrate an understanding of how literacy practices and needs differ across content areas (e.g., science, math, history, art)
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to appropriately use texts (e.g., nonprint materials, media, trade books, textbooks, and electronic texts) within diverse genres for multiple purposes and life-long learning
- Demonstrate knowledge of a variety of children's/adolescent's literature, including multicultural literature, and how to mediate it to enhance instruction
- Demonstrate an understanding of how technology can be used to enhance instruction
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to teach students to recursively apply strategies for planning, drafting, revising, and editing texts to different genres for a variety of purposes and audiences
- Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of publication of student writing in literacy acquisition
- Demonstrate an understanding of deliberate vocabulary instruction across grades and content areas
- Demonstrate knowledge of how to plan and implement instruction that addresses the strengths and needs of all students
- Demonstrate an understanding of instructional decisions to accommodate learners with social, cultural, linguistic, and cognitive differences

- Demonstrate knowledge of various instructional grouping strategies to motivate and engage all students (e.g., flexible, whole class, small group, individual, ability/achievement) and the issues associated with each
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to create a safe and respectful learning environment for all students
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to organize programmatic activities to encourage reading (e.g., book groups, read-a-thons) with an understanding of differences between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation

III. Application of Theoretical and Knowledge Bases of Reading in Diagnosis and Assessment

- Demonstrate an understanding of the nature and multiple causes of reading difficulties
- Demonstrate an understanding of the appropriate selection, use, and interpretation of formal assessment tools (e.g., norm-referenced tests, criterion-referenced tests, formal and informal inventories, on-demand direct writing) and teacher-developed assessment tools (e.g., constructed-response measurements, portfolio-based assessments, running records, miscue analysis, student self-evaluations, work/performance samples, observations, anecdotal records, journals) to report, evaluate and modify instruction for successful learning
- Demonstrate an understanding of basic measurement concepts (e.g., reliability, validity)
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to consult and collaborate with the classroom teacher to use assessment results to evaluate and modify reading instruction
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to communicate the findings of reading assessment data with all stakeholders effectively (e.g., students, parents, classroom teachers, guidance counselors, speech teachers, and other personnel)
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to communicate and collaborate children's reading development with families effectively

IV. Reading Leadership

- Demonstrate an understanding of how to develop and adapt reading programs to meet student needs within the framework of guidelines and regulations at the classroom, building, district, state, and federal levels
- Demonstrate an awareness of how to access literacy research and disseminate it across grade levels
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to use school-wide initiatives and other services to students to improve instruction
- Demonstrate an understanding of how standards and their assessment define curriculum, impact the reading program, and influence instruction
- Demonstrate an understanding of culturally relevant curricular approaches to improve instruction
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to critically analyze school-wide reading programs and initiatives in relation to reading goals and student needs
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to serve as a resource within the school
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to promote collaboration among colleagues (e.g., classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, volunteers) for the literacy development of all students
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to engage in, promote, and provide professional development opportunities
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of school and community when promoting home-school connections
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to promote positive and effective literacy connections between the home and the school
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to promote positive and effective literacy connections between the school and the community

Sample Test Questions

The sample questions that follow illustrate the kinds of questions in 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.

Directions: Each of the questions or incomplete statements below is followed by five suggested answers. For each item, select the response that best answers the question or completes the statement.

1. A class of third graders and their teacher are reading a brief passage. During the activity, the teacher uses a “think aloud” while reading orally. The teacher’s purpose for using this technique is primarily to
 - (A) encourage children to pay attention and read along
 - (B) sequence important story events
 - (C) verbalize predictions, relationships to prior knowledge, and self-corrections
 - (D) model expressive oral reading and appropriate phrasing
 - (E) retell the story using simplified vocabulary and clear explanations
2. According to research, which of the following is the single most important home-based activity for preschool children in building the knowledge required for children’s eventual success in reading?
 - (A) Memorizing nursery rhymes
 - (B) Talking with parents about school
 - (C) Practicing the alphabet
 - (D) Being read to by parents
 - (E) Having parents define unfamiliar words
3. The children read the sentence “Jane and Joe stepped out of the store and immediately opened their umbrellas.” The teacher then asked, “What was the weather like?” The teacher probably wanted the children to
 - (A) recognize a detail from the sentence
 - (B) evaluate an opinion
 - (C) make an inference
 - (D) identify the author’s point of view
 - (E) predict an outcome
4. In attempting to understand a science textbook chapter about the solar system, a student could apply knowledge by doing which of the following?
 - (A) Analyzing the text to understand the author’s organizational strategy
 - (B) Making an outline according to the chapter’s headings and subheadings
 - (C) Choosing a reading strategy that will accommodate the author’s style
 - (D) Developing questions about the text prior to reading, and then reading to answer those questions
 - (E) Using the survey, question, read, recite, review method (SQ3R)
5. During an oral reading assessment, a third-grade teacher notices that Kale reads word by word at a rate of 35 words per minute. He is able to recall the sight words automatically but struggles with unfamiliar words. His oral summary of the passage indicates that he has difficulty comprehending the text. Which of the following strategies would be most effective in helping Kale improve his reading fluency?
 - (A) Increasing the amount of time Kale spends on sustained silent reading
 - (B) Providing focused instruction on specific phonics skills
 - (C) Engaging Kale in learning activities that replace oral reading
 - (D) Introducing metacognitive comprehension skills during whole-group instruction
 - (E) Providing opportunities for Kale to practice the first-grade high-frequency words

6. A kindergarten student segments the word “smiled” in the following way: s-m-ie-l-d. Which of the following best identifies how the student segments the word?
- (A) Syllables
 - (B) Phonemes
 - (C) Morphemes
 - (D) Graphophonemes
 - (E) Consonant cluster
7. Of the following, the most effective activity for providing vocabulary practice at the intermediate level is to ask students to
- (A) write each new word a specified number of times while subvocalizing its pronunciation
 - (B) look up the meaning of each new word in the dictionary and copy each definition
 - (C) consult a thesaurus to find other words that mean nearly the same as the new words
 - (D) write a paragraph in which each new word presented during the lesson must be used
 - (E) engage in word-association activities to broaden students’ range of choices for expressing their ideas
8. According to research, effective vocabulary instruction integrates new information with familiar information. Which of the following approaches would best provide such integration?
- (A) Dictionary reference
 - (B) Root word
 - (C) Rote memorization
 - (D) Oral modeling
 - (E) Semantic feature analysis
9. Which of the following is considered the first step in a directed reading lesson?
- (A) The students read the text aloud.
 - (B) The students answer comprehension questions.
 - (C) The students look up unfamiliar words in a dictionary.
 - (D) The teacher summarizes the text.
 - (E) The teacher discusses with the students key concepts related to the text topic.
10. pet week when clean
 reel she team creek
 west help keep me
- After a lesson on the differences between vowels and consonants, a first-grade teacher asks the students to place each of the words listed above into one of two columns. One column is headed “CVC or CVCC.” The other column is headed “CVCV or CVCe.” The purpose of this activity is to help students learn
- (A) words with diphthongs and short vowels
 - (B) two spelling patterns for long e and one for short e
 - (C) spelling patterns for l-controlled vowels
 - (D) words with consonant digraphs
 - (E) words with unaccented final syllables
11. A reading specialist involved with the selection of materials should judge textbooks according to
- (A) curriculum objectives and students’ reading levels
 - (B) students’ performance on standardized tests
 - (C) students’ self-concepts, feelings, and attitudes
 - (D) classroom teachers’ preferences in textbook format
 - (E) classroom learning conditions
12. The teachers in a school district have indicated an interest in learning more about administering an informal reading inventory. Which of the following in-service experiences would be most useful to these teachers?
- (A) A presentation by an outside expert on informal reading inventories
 - (B) A demonstration of how to use an informal reading inventory
 - (C) Guided practice in administering an informal reading inventory
 - (D) Discussion sessions on the advantages and limitations of informal reading inventories
 - (E) An illustrated lecture on informal reading inventories

Answers

- 1.** The best answer is C. A “think aloud” is a means of verbalizing one’s thoughts. It can be used by teachers to model ways in which skilled readers make predictions, use visualizations, relate prior knowledge, and monitor and self-correct their comprehension. After several modeling experiences, students can work with partners to practice “think alouds,” taking turns reading orally and sharing thoughts.
- 2.** The best answer is D. Research shows that parents’ reading aloud to children, especially during the preschool years, is the most influential home literacy activity. The benefits are greatest when the children are active participants. Reading to children and discussing the stories is a social and interactive event that helps prepare children for success in reading.
- 3.** The best answer is C. This task requires the reader to use both text information and background knowledge to infer that Jane and Joe most likely opened their umbrellas because it was raining.
- 4.** The correct answer is A. The student is performing text-structure analysis which examines the structural characteristics of text, such as coherence and organization, with respect to comprehensibility.
- 5.** The best answer is B. Kale is having difficulty with decoding, fluency, and comprehension. While small-group instruction should include strategies in all three areas, instructional intervention should always begin at the lowest level of skill. Kale’s difficulty with decoding unfamiliar words is impeding his ability to read the text fluently, which inhibits his ability to comprehend the text.
- 6.** The best answer is B. Phonemes are the smallest sounds of speech that are combined to create spoken language. The way in which the word “smiled” is divided distinguishes the individual sounds in the word.
- 7.** The best answer is E. The meaningful use of vocabulary involving inference is basic to good vocabulary instruction. Choices A through D do not emphasize the combination of meaning and inference.
- 8.** The best answer is E. Semantic feature analysis, based on the way students organize knowledge, is a sound visual instructional practice that uses a reader’s prior knowledge. It shows students how words that are closely related contain some similar characteristics and some different characteristics.
- 9.** The correct answer is E. In DRA (directed reading activity), teachers first help students access background knowledge about the content.
- 10.** The correct answer is B. All of the words listed in the question can best be described as demonstrating spelling patterns for either long e or short e.
- 11.** The best answer is A, which pertains to key criteria for selecting instructional materials. Although the other choices deal with organizing for effective instruction, choices B and C deal with knowledge of individual differences, and choices D and E deal with knowledge of contextual factors.
- 12.** The best answer is C. Administering an informal reading inventory requires teachers to perform many steps as they listen to and/or observe students read and respond to questions. Guided practice (C) would provide a more effective and efficient way for teachers to learn necessary procedures than would the less interactive methods suggested in the other choices.



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