

The Praxis® Study Companion

Teaching Reading

5204



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*® 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.

How are the *Praxis* tests given?

Praxis tests are given on computer. Other formats are available for test takers approved for accommodations (see page 36).

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.

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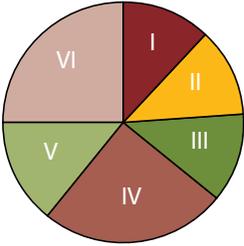
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1. Learn About Your Test

Learn about the specific test you will be taking

Teaching Reading (5204)

Test at a Glance			
Test Name	Teaching Reading		
Test Code	5204		
Time	2 hours		
Number of Questions	90 selected response; 3 constructed response		
Format	Selected-response and constructed-response questions		
Test Delivery	Computer delivered		
	Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of Examination
	I. Emergent Literacy A. Oral Language B. Concepts of Print II. Phonological Awareness III. Alphabetic Principle/Phonics and Word Analysis IV. Comprehension and Fluency V. Vocabulary VI. Instructional Processes A. Instructional Practices B. Curriculum Materials C. Assessment	15 selected response 14 selected response 14 selected response 30 selected response 17 selected response 1 constructed response 1 constructed response 1 constructed response	12% 12% 12% 25% 14% 25%

About This Test

The *Praxis* Teaching Reading test is designed to support both

- licensing an entry-level reading teacher
- adding a reading endorsement to an existing license

Teaching Reading is designed for individuals whose preparatory program has included intensive training in the teaching of reading.

The test content reflects the five essential components of effective reading instruction as identified by the National Reading Panel: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Comprehension, and Vocabulary.

Test questions call on the individual's knowledge of reading theory and practice as well as the ability to apply knowledge and principles to instructional situations. The test taker will be required to analyze and respond to situations involving both classes and individual students for students at grade levels from kindergarten through high school, including students with diverse needs.

Note: The Teaching Reading test does not assume that the test taker has graduate-level preparation to be a reading specialist. It does not test the consulting, coordinating, and supervisory roles that might be part of the responsibility of a licensed reading specialist.

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 on page 29.

I. Emergent Literacy

A. Oral Language

The reading teacher

1. Understands the interrelatedness between oral language development and reading skills such as phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension
2. Recognizes receptive and expressive components associated with stages of oral language development
3. Understands how environmental influences affect students' oral language development
4. Knows how to model the rules of standard English while respecting regional and dialectical variations
5. Understands appropriate techniques to assess students' oral language development

B. Concepts of Print

The reading teacher

1. Recognizes the interrelatedness between print and speech
2. Understands how environmental print, pictures, and symbols contribute to literacy development
3. Understands the importance of modeling one-to-one word correspondence and directionality,

including left-to-right, top-to-bottom, front-to-back

4. Understands how environmental influences affect students' development of print awareness
5. Understands the importance of students' being able to differentiate words and spaces, first and last letters, and identification of basic punctuation
6. Understands appropriate strategies for teaching letter recognition
7. Knows appropriate techniques, including observation, to assess students' print awareness

II. Phonological Awareness

The reading teacher

1. Understands the relationship between phonological and phonemic awareness
2. Understands the fundamental relationship between phonemic awareness and the development of decoding and encoding skills
3. Understands the progression of phonological awareness skills (e.g., word awareness, responsiveness to rhyme and alliteration, syllable awareness, onset and rime manipulation, and phoneme awareness)
4. Knows the age ranges at which the various phonological awareness skills should be acquired and how that knowledge applies to instructional practice
5. Knows systematic and explicit instructional strategies for teaching phonological awareness skills
6. Understands the theory and practice of effective techniques to assess students' phonological awareness

III. Alphabetic Principle/Phonics and Word Analysis

The reading teacher

1. Understands the differences between phonics and phonological awareness
2. Understands the developmental stages that readers of all ages progress through when learning to decode and encode (spell)
3. Understands that the instruction of phonics for decoding and encoding progresses from simple to more complex (e.g., letter-sound correspondences, blends, and digraphs)

4. Understands how to differentiate between phonetically regular and irregular words
5. Knows syllable types and syllabication principles
6. Understands systematic and explicit instructional strategies for teaching phonics and word analysis
7. Understands instructional strategies for reading and spelling multisyllabic words using meaningful units, such as morphemes, syllables, and affixes
8. Understands that the use of decodable text, writing practice, and spelling practice can reinforce specific phonics skills
9. Knows effective techniques to assess students' phonics and word analysis skills (e.g., formal and informal phonics and spelling inventories)

IV. Comprehension and Fluency

A. Comprehension

The reading teacher

1. Understands the relationship between students' background knowledge and comprehension
2. Understands that vocabulary is an important part of comprehension
3. Understands the relationship between comprehension and students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds
4. Understands how to use systematic and explicit instruction to develop comprehension skills (i.e., self-monitoring, using graphic organizers and story structures, generating questions, and summarizing)
5. Understands that students should use multiple strategies to enhance reading comprehension
6. Understands the role of language structures of text (e.g., sentence, phrase, paragraph) in comprehension
7. Understands the role that features of text (e.g., headings, subheadings) play in comprehension
8. Understands how to use genres of written text that have recognizable structures to enhance comprehension
9. Understands how to use writing activities to support reading comprehension
10. Knows how to model effective strategies for comprehending a variety of writing styles, such as narrative, expository, descriptive, and persuasive

11. Knows how to choose appropriate text for students, taking into account interest and ability level
12. Understands effective formal and informal methods to assess students' reading comprehension

B. Fluency

The reading teacher

1. Understands that fluency with all components of reading acts as a bridge to the comprehension of text
2. Understands that oral reading fluency consists of accuracy, appropriate rate, automaticity, and prosody (i.e., intonation, expression, and flow)
3. Understands that fluency in the different components of reading can be developed through various strategies such as repeated use of word lists, phrases, and passages at appropriate instructional levels
4. Understands how to use effective instructional strategies to improve oral reading fluency
5. Understands how to use formal and informal methods of assessing reading fluency

V. Vocabulary

The reading teacher

1. Knows how to model the use of context as a strategy to confirm word meaning
2. Understands how common prefixes, suffixes, and roots affect the meaning of English words
3. Understands basic word relationships such as synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms
4. Understands how to use direct and indirect methods to teach vocabulary
5. Understands how to select appropriate words for vocabulary instruction
6. Understands how grammatical functions and word forms affect meaning
7. Understands the importance of both offering a wide range of reading opportunities and providing materials with rich contextual support for vocabulary development
8. Understands how to assess and monitor vocabulary knowledge

VI. Instructional Processes

A. Instructional Practices

The reading teacher

1. Creates a learning environment that supports literacy development by incorporating motivational strategies that encourage active student engagement
2. Understands a variety of strategies to differentiate instruction

B. Curriculum Material

The reading teacher

1. Recognizes the differences in kinds of texts and their various uses
2. Understands how to select instructional materials that reflect societal diversity
3. Understands how to integrate appropriate technology to support literacy instruction

C. Assessment

The reading teacher

1. Understands how to use a variety of types of assessments
2. Uses assessment data to inform instruction
3. Communicates students' progress in reading to stakeholders (i.e., parents and administration)

2. Familiarize Yourself with Test Questions

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

The *Praxis* 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 answer choices.

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

- **Clicking more than one oval** to select answers from a list of choices.
- **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 choices and drag your answers to the appropriate location in a table, paragraph of text or graphic.
- **Selecting answer choices from a drop-down menu.** You may be asked to choose answers by selecting choices 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 20.

3. Practice with Sample Test Questions

Answer practice questions and find explanations for correct answers

Computer Delivery

This test is available via computer delivery. The following sample question provides a preview of an actual screen used in a computer-delivered test. For the purposes of this Study Companion, the sample questions are shown as they would appear in a paper-delivered test.

The screenshot shows a test interface with a dark header bar. On the left is the ETS PRAXIS logo. On the right are buttons for Volume, Mark, Review, Help, Back, and Next. Below the header, a light green bar displays 'Reading & Language Arts CKT | Question 1 of 63' and a timer '01:29:56' with a 'Hide Time' option. The main content area contains a question about proofreading marks and four radio button options: Ideas, Voice, Conventions, and Organization. A grey instruction box at the bottom says 'Answer the question above by clicking on the correct response.'

ETS PRAXIS

Volume Mark Review Help Back Next

Reading & Language Arts CKT | Question 1 of 63 01:29:56 Hide Time

During a writing activity a teacher writes two sentences from a sample of a student's writing on the whiteboard. The teacher shows the students how to use appropriate proofreading marks and asks the students to proofread the first paragraph of their individual writing samples.

Which of the following traits is the teacher's focus?

- Ideas
- Voice
- Conventions
- Organization

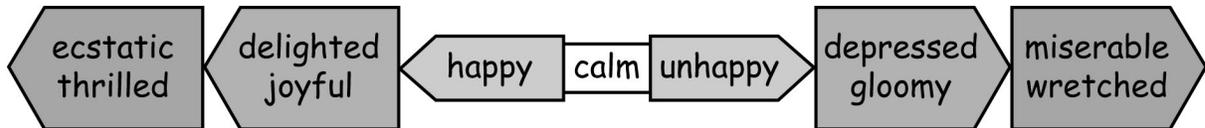
Answer the question above by clicking on the correct response.

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.

Directions: Each of the questions or statements below is followed by four suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case.

Before writing narratives, fifth-grade students use reference materials to create semantic gradients like the one shown. The semantic gradients are posted around the classroom so that students can refer to them while writing.



- The primary objective of the lesson is for students to effectively use reference materials during writing as tools for
 - selecting precise language
 - spelling words correctly
 - generating imaginative ideas
 - avoiding repetitive vocabulary
- Instructional activities in which of the following areas will best improve a student's encoding skills?
 - Fluency
 - Vocabulary
 - Phonemic awareness
 - Comprehension strategies
- Administering an informal reading inventory best assesses a student in which of the following areas?
 - Oral reading fluency
 - Instructional reading level
 - Stage of spelling development
 - Preferences in genres and topics of books
- Which of the following is the best way for a teacher to assess students' phonemic awareness?
 - Asking students to identify the letter at the beginning of the word "desk"
 - Saying the word "lamp" and asking students to break it into individual sounds
 - Distributing the letter cards "b," "a," and "t" and asking students to order the letters to create a word
 - Displaying the written word "cat" and asking students to sound it out as they tap each letter

5. Which of the following best describes a direct instruction method in which students learn new vocabulary words?
- (A) Facilitating daily independent reading time
 - (B) Incorporating wordplay activities into the school day
 - (C) Providing both fiction and nonfiction texts in the classroom library
 - (D) Introducing text-specific words before lessons and activities
6. As part of a reading class, a teacher requires students to keep a response journal for the texts they have read. The teacher's purpose in having the students write their response is that writing can
- (A) focus students' attention on facts and eliminate feelings
 - (B) make students keep track of the books they read and share them
 - (C) help students discover more of what they think and feel about a text
 - (D) help students increase their reading fluency
7. Which of the following instructional strategies best completes the chart?

Reading Comprehension	Reading Fluency	Writing	Vocabulary
Directed reading-thinking activity	Shared reading	Sentence combining	Word hunts
Inquiry chart	Partner reading	Paragraph hamburger	Possible sentences
Think-pair-share	?	Revising	Word walls

- (A) Semantic feature analysis
 - (B) Brainstorming
 - (C) Readers' theater
 - (D) Anticipation guide
8. A third-grade class has just finished reading a mystery about a haunted house. Their teacher shows them several pictures of houses and instructs them to select one of the houses and write about how it reflects characteristics of the house in the story. Which of the following skills does the activity primarily help to reinforce?
- (A) Understanding cause-and-effect relationships
 - (B) Selecting appropriate details from text to support ideas
 - (C) Identifying structural elements in a short story
 - (D) Confirming predictions about the events of a story
9. Which of the following is a characteristic of the language experience approach (LEA) to teaching reading to beginning readers?
- (A) Emphasis on letter/sound relationships in isolation from other language skills
 - (B) Instruction and experience in writing before reading
 - (C) Emphasis on the connection between oral and written language
 - (D) Reliance on classic children's literature rather than on books with a controlled vocabulary

10. Which of the following pairs of words demonstrates that different letter combinations can represent the same speech sound?
- (A) Church . . chorus
 - (B) Bow . . bow
 - (C) Hot . . cold
 - (D) Phone . . laugh
11. During progress monitoring, a student continues to demonstrate weaknesses in word-reading accuracy and prosody. Which of the following strategies should the teacher implement to best help the student?
- (A) Allowing time for the student to read independent grade-level texts repeatedly
 - (B) Using leveled texts to instruct the student on decoding and sight-word recognition
 - (C) Increasing the student's reading of a variety of texts by supplying diverse materials
 - (D) Providing the student with direct instruction in vocabulary words with lower-level texts
12. A teacher writes the following four sentences with underlined new vocabulary on the board. Which of sentences best illustrates the use of an example as a type of context clue to assist students in determining word meaning?
- (A) Toads, frogs, and some birds are predators that hunt and eat spiders.
 - (B) The disease is so contagious that the student could not return to school until the doctor reported others would not be in danger of getting it.
 - (C) While many teenagers are quite loquacious, others hardly talk at all.
 - (D) The young child's pertinacity, or stubbornness, is the reason his parents sometimes need to discipline him.
13. Use the information listed to answer the question
- Bandwagon
 - Testimonial
 - Rewards
 - Glittering generality
- The devices listed should most likely be taught during a lesson in which of the following genres?
- (A) Narrative
 - (B) Biographical
 - (C) Persuasive
 - (D) Poetry
14. A teacher is designing an instructional plan for a small group of students who are having difficulty decoding unfamiliar multisyllabic words. The most appropriate approach to address the students' need is to teach them to
- (A) sound out multisyllabic words phoneme by phoneme
 - (B) clap out the number of syllables in multisyllabic words
 - (C) memorize grade-appropriate word lists that contain multisyllabic words
 - (D) look for affixes and morphemes in multisyllabic words
15. Which of the following terms is best described as connecting background knowledge with clues in the text to come up with an idea that is not explicitly stated by the author?
- (A) Visualizing
 - (B) Inferring
 - (C) Predicting
 - (D) Summarizing

16. Which of the following is the most accurate statement about the language acquisition process of young children?
- (A) Young children understand full sentences at a relatively late stage in language development.
 - (B) Young children exhibit random, highly variable errors in sentence construction.
 - (C) Young children infer the underlying rules of language to which they are exposed.
 - (D) Young children require planned early instructional intervention to master the grammar of the English language
17. Which of the following words is most appropriate for a teacher to use during a lesson on how to use structural analysis to learn new words?
- (A) Help
 - (B) Abnormal
 - (C) Maintain
 - (D) Detail
18. Which of the following teacher prompts will best assess a first-grade student's phonemic awareness?
- (A) Say to the student, "Sound out the separate sounds in the word 'bat.'"
 - (B) Ask the student, "Which letter begins the word 'bat'?"
 - (C) Point to the word "bat" in a book. Ask the student, "Can you sound out this word?"
 - (D) Give the student "b," "a," and "t" letter cards. Say, "Make a word with these cards."
19. A second-grade teacher uses an assessment tool for coding, scoring, and analyzing a child's oral reading behavior. Which of the following best describes this technique?
- (A) Running record
 - (B) Reader's conference
 - (C) Process interview
 - (D) Shared reading
20. Which of the following approaches best reflects research about teaching the alphabetic principle to young students?
- (A) Teaching students the letters and their corresponding sounds in alphabetical order
 - (B) Introducing students to the long-vowel sounds before introducing them to the short-vowel sounds
 - (C) Introducing students to similar-sounding or -looking letters in close succession
 - (D) Teaching students continuous vowel and consonant sounds before stop or clipped sounds
21. During a reading conference, a teacher notices that a student is unable to answer basic comprehension questions about a book after reading it. Which of the following actions is best for the teacher to take first?
- (A) Preparing an outline of the plot to assist the student in recalling important details
 - (B) Encouraging the student to reread the parts of the book that were difficult to understand
 - (C) Conducting a mini-lesson on active reading strategies the student can use while reading
 - (D) Administering an informal assessment to identify the skills with which the student is struggling
22. Studies generally support the belief that emergent readers will find which of the following most helpful in decoding new words?
- (A) Knowledge of initial consonant sounds and medial vowel sounds
 - (B) Knowledge of beginning and ending consonant sounds
 - (C) Context and configuration
 - (D) Knowledge of initial consonant sounds and context

Answers to Sample Questions

1. The correct answer is (A). This question tests your knowledge of teaching semantic gradients to support students in understanding shades of meaning. The reference materials used to make semantic gradients, namely dictionaries and thesauri, help students recognize that while words can mean nearly the same thing, the nuances are different. Using reference materials to create semantic gradients supports students in selecting precise vocabulary to convey the intended message.
2. The correct answer is (C). This question tests your knowledge of instructional activities to improve students' encoding skills. Developing phonemic awareness helps students spell and write words better (encoding).
3. The correct answer is (B). This question tests your knowledge of reading assessment. An informal reading inventory is designed to evaluate a number of aspects of students' reading performance, including reading level, by assessing students' comprehension of leveled passages.
4. The correct answer is (B). This question tests your knowledge of phonemic awareness. A student who possesses phonemic awareness can segment sounds in spoken words and blend strings of isolated sounds together to form recognizable words.
5. The correct answer is (D). This question tests your knowledge of direct vocabulary instruction. The teacher needs to first provide direct instruction of text-specific vocabulary words before students engage in reading. Students then can be guided by the teacher to practice the newly learned vocabulary in different activities and contexts.
6. The correct answer is (C). This question tests your knowledge of the use of reading response journals. Response journals offer students an opportunity to connect their lives to the text and also deepen their understanding.
7. The correct answer is (C). This question tests your knowledge of the use of an effective strategy to improve fluency skills. Facilitating a readers' theater is an effective strategy for improving fluency skills.
8. The correct answer is (B). This question tests your knowledge of a reading strategy that uses supporting details to reinforce comprehension. The strategy of using pictures of houses to prompt students to write about the characteristics of the house in the story helps students select appropriate details from the text to support their ideas.
9. The correct answer is (C). This question tests your knowledge of the language experience approach. In addition to providing enthusiasm for reading and writing, the language experience approach helps students make the connection that words on paper are really just "talk written down." The motto of the language experience approach is "Anything I can say, I can write; anything I can write, I can read."
10. The correct answer is (D). This question tests your knowledge of phonics. The letter combinations of "ph" and "gh" fall into the category of consonant irregularities. Both the "ph" in "phone" and the "gh" in "laugh" represent the sound of /f/.
11. The correct answer is (B). This question tests your knowledge of how to help developing readers acquire underlying alphabetic skills, which will help increase oral reading fluency. Use of leveled texts can be used to increase automaticity with sight words, decodable words and connected text.
12. The correct answer is (A). This question tests your knowledge of using sentences to illustrate a type of context clue that assists students in determining word meaning. In the sentence, specific examples of predators are used to help the reader infer the meaning of the vocabulary word.
13. The correct answer is (C). This question tests your knowledge of the use of devices to teach a specific genre. The four devices listed are used to persuade readers.
14. The correct answer is (D). This question tests your knowledge of a strategy to use to help students who are having difficulty decoding unfamiliar multisyllabic words. Research suggests that the most appropriate approach to address the students' need is to teach them to recognize affixes and morphemes to aid students in decoding multisyllabic words.
15. The correct answer is (B). This question tests your knowledge of the skill of inferring. Inferring is defined as a reader connecting what he or she already knows with clues in the text to come up with an idea that is not directly stated in the text.
16. The correct answer is (C). This question tests your knowledge of human growth and development. Young children begin to acquire the ability to communicate through hypothesis testing. Children's perception of adult speech helps them form hypotheses about how different ideas are expressed in the language they are acquiring, and then they test their hypotheses.

17. The correct answer is (B). This question tests your knowledge of using structural analysis to teach students new words. Structural analysis is the use of prefixes, suffixes, and root words to understand the meaning of an unknown word. The word “abnormal” is the only word that has a prefix and a root word and so would be useful in teaching structural analysis.

18. The correct answer is (A). This question tests your knowledge of the use of a teacher prompt to assess a first-grade student’s phonemic awareness. A child who can manipulate the sounds in spoken words has a firm grasp of phonemic awareness. The other options involve connecting spoken sounds to corresponding printed letters, which takes the options out of the range of phonemic awareness.

19. The correct answer is (A). This question tests your knowledge of an assessment tool to use when assessing a student’s oral reading. A running record is a tool that helps teachers identify patterns in student reading behaviors. These patterns allow a teacher to see the strategies a student uses to make meaning of individual words and texts as a whole.

20. The correct answer is (D). This question tests your knowledge of approaches that best reflect research about teaching the alphabetic principle to young students. Research states that it is best to teach continuous vowel and consonant sounds before teaching stopped or clipped sounds. Continuous vowel and consonant sounds can be prolonged or stretched out when they are pronounced and are easier to say without distortion. Voiced stop sounds are not as easy to pronounce in isolation without a vowel sound.

21. The correct answer is (D). This question tests your knowledge of the many factors that can contribute to reading comprehension difficulties, including phonological and fluency skills. Administering an informal assessment to identify the skills with which the student is struggling will help the teacher to provide needed support in the area the student needs most.

22. The correct answer is (D). This question tests your knowledge of teaching students decoding skills. At the emergent reader level, students are beginning to learn that reading is a communicative process. Use of emergent readers’ knowledge of initial consonant sounds and their use of context clues to check meaning are important early decoding strategies.

About the Constructed-Response Questions

The Teaching Reading test consists of three constructed-response questions that require the candidate to demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge and theory of reading to specific students' needs and classroom scenarios.

Each task will be scored on a 0–3 scale using the following general scoring guide.

General Scoring Guide for Constructed-Response Questions

Score of 3

The response demonstrates a thorough understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

A response in this category:

- Clearly and specifically answers all parts of the question in a way that directly addresses the instructional situation described.
- Shows strong knowledge of concepts, theories, facts, procedures, or methodologies relevant to the question. Any errors of fact or terminology are minor and do not detract from the understanding shown.
- Provides a strong explanation that is well supported by relevant evidence.

Score of 2

The response demonstrates a basic or general understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

A response in this category:

- Adequately answers most or all parts of the question in a way that is appropriate for the instructional situation described.
- Shows basic or general knowledge of concepts, theories, facts, procedures, or methodologies relevant to the question. Any errors do not detract from the general understanding shown.
- Provides a basic explanation that is adequately supported by relevant evidence.

Score of 1

The response demonstrates a weak or limited understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

A response in this category

- Answers some part (or parts) of the question at a basic level.
- Has one or more of the following weaknesses:
 - fails to answer most parts of the question and/or fails to address crucial aspects of the instructional situation described
 - shows weak or limited knowledge of concepts, theories, facts, procedures, or methodologies relevant to the question. The weakness may be indicated by errors or misconceptions
 - provides no explanation or an explanation that is weak and inadequately supported by evidence

Score of 0

The response demonstrates no understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

A response in this category:

- Fails to respond appropriately to any part of the question.
- Shows no knowledge of concepts, theories, facts, procedures, or methodologies relevant to the question; or any information presented about reading and reading instruction is seriously in error.

Note: The mere presence of reading-specific words or phrases that might be used in an adequate response does not by itself indicate knowledge.

Also receiving a score of 0 would be responses that are blank, completely off-topic, or not written in English.

Sample Question

Directions:

Read the scenario and then respond to all parts of the task. The suggested time to spend on this question is 10 minutes.

Scenario:

The early childhood teachers in a school have decided to implement interdisciplinary science units with a focus on reading. The district has implemented a policy that all schools must include a technology component that will support reading instruction.

Task:

Be sure to respond to both of the following:

- Briefly describe an instructional material the teachers would use within these units to support the reading focus. Explain the criteria used to evaluate the material in meeting these instructional needs.
- Briefly describe an activity using technology with the interdisciplinary science units. Specify how the activity supports student reading goals.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 3

Teachers can use tradebooks to help integrate reading into a science unit. The instructional material that is needed is a variety of books on the differing reading levels of the students. An example of this would be teaching a science unit on deserts. The teacher would collect books at different readability levels on living in a desert, animals in a desert, or any other related topics to use with the class. The criteria used to ensure the books meet instructional needs are that they are at an appropriate reading level for the students, have a connection to the topic being studied, and contain accurate information.

A technological activity the students could do would be an online net lab. The students would, for example, be required to follow written instructions as they completed a simulation of a lab activity such as the dissection of an owl pellet. Reading skills such as cause and effect could be reinforced with a webquest through which students discovered and observed relationships between actions. Related hands-on activities could be linked to the webquest tasks. By using these methods of integrating science and reading, the teachers can meet the technology component mandated by the district and further support students' reading development.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 2

I would begin by finding books on insects. Every day we would read books and discuss reading techniques and skills. We would also collect bugs and caterpillars to study. Using PowerPoint, we would make slides that compared and contrasted different insects as a class. Each student would then choose a bug to study and make a slide with a picture and sentence about their insect. I will evaluate the students' ability to use PowerPoint and make notes on which students need a little more help. We will then make a CD with all the insect slides and burn copies of it so that each student can take one home. We will then have a short quiz on the reading to check for comprehension.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 1

An instructional material that teachers would use for the unit could be how a butterfly grows. The kids are learning reading and science at the same time. They could have a computer in the classroom and have Leapfrog Interactive Reading on the computer. The technology would be helping the kids to read and they would be having fun while doing it.

Score of 1

I would begin by finding books on insects. Every day we would read books and discuss reading techniques and skills. We would also collect bugs and caterpillars to study. Using PowerPoint, we would make slides that compared and contrasted different insects as a class. Each student would then choose a bug to study and make a slide with a picture and sentence about their insect. I will evaluate the students' ability to use PowerPoint and make notes on which students need a little more help. We will then make a CD with all the insect slides and burn copies of it so that each student can take one home. We will then have a short quiz on the reading to check for comprehension.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 1

An instructional material that teachers would use for the unit could be how a butterfly grows. The kids are learning reading and science at the same time. They could have a computer in the classroom and have Leapfrog Interactive Reading on the computer. The technology would be helping the kids to read and they would be having fun while doing it.

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 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. 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.
- 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 39.

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 27 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 27, 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
Key Ideas and Details						
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
Craft, Structure, and Language Skills						
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
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas						
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

Detailed study topics with questions for discussion

Using the Study Topics That Follow

The Teaching Reading 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 will help improve your understanding of fundamental concepts and may 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. Emergent Literacy

A. Oral Language

The reading teacher

1. Understands the interrelatedness between oral language development and reading skills, such as phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension
2. Recognizes receptive and expressive components associated with stages of oral language development
 - a. expectations at each stage of oral language development associated with each stage of oral language development
 - b. identifies strategies that strengthen students receptive and expressive skills
3. Understands how environmental influences affect students' oral language development
 - a. Code-switching between academic and conversational language
 - Identifies strategies for oral language vocabulary
4. Knows how to model the rules of standard English while respecting regional and dialectical variations
5. Knows how to model the rules of standard English syntax
6. Understands appropriate techniques to assess students' oral language development

B. Concepts of Print

The reading teacher

1. Recognizes the interrelatedness between print and speech
 - a. strategies to increase students' awareness of the relationship of speech to print
 - Language-experience approach
 - shared writing
 - morning message
 - interactive writing
2. Understands how environmental print, pictures, and symbols contribute to literacy development

3. Understands the importance of modeling one-to-one word correspondence and directionality, including left-to-right, top-to-bottom, front-to-back
4. Understands how environmental influences affect students' development of print awareness
5. Understands appropriate techniques to assess students' oral language development.
6. Understands the importance of students' being able to differentiate words and spaces, first and last letters, and identification of basic punctuation
7. Understands appropriate strategies for teaching letter recognition
8. Knows techniques to assess students' print awareness

Discussion areas: Emergent Literacy

- What are ways that teachers can model the rules of Standard English while respecting regional and dialectical variations?
- What are some instructional strategies for teaching letter recognition?
- How can students' print awareness be assessed?

II. Phonological Awareness

The reading teacher

1. Understands the relationship between phonological and phonemic awareness
2. Understands the fundamental relationship between phonemic awareness and the development of decoding and encoding skills
 - a. ability to orally identify and later produce a matching rhyming word
 - b. sound matching and sound isolation
 - c. auditory blending and segmenting of sounds
 - d. invented spelling
3. Understands the progression of phonemic awareness skills
 - a. rhyming
 - b. sentence segmentation
 - c. syllable segmentation
 - d. onset-rime blending and segmentation
 - e. phoneme deletion and manipulation

4. Knows the age ranges at which the various phonological awareness skills should be acquired and how that knowledge applies to instructional practice
5. Knows systematic and explicit instructional strategies for teaching phonological awareness skills
6. Understands the theory and practice of effective techniques to assess students' phonological awareness

Discussion areas: Phonological Awareness

- At which age ranges should the various phonological skills be acquired?
- What does the term “phonemic awareness” mean?
- How is phonemic awareness related to phonological awareness?
- What is the relationship between phonemic awareness and the development of decoding and encoding skills?

III. Alphabetic Principle/Phonics and Word Analysis

The reading teacher

1. Understands the differences between phonics and phonological awareness
2. Understands the developmental stages that readers of all ages progress through when learning to decode and encode (spell)
3. Understands that the instruction of phonics for decoding and encoding progresses from simple to more complex (e.g., letter-sound correspondences, blends, and digraphs)
4. Understands how to differentiate between phonetically regular and irregular words
5. Knows syllable types and syllabication principles
6. Understands systematic and explicit instructional strategies for teaching phonics and word analysis
7. Understands instructional strategies for reading and spelling multisyllabic words using meaningful units, such as morphemes, syllables, and accenting principles
8. Understands that the use of decodable text, writing practice, and spelling practice can reinforce specific phonics skills
9. Knows effective techniques to assess students' phonics and word analysis skills (e.g., formal and informal phonics and spelling inventories)

Discussion areas: Alphabetic Principles/ Phonics and Word Analysis

- What is the difference between phonics and phonological awareness?
- What role do decodable text, writing practice, and spelling practice play in reinforcing specific phonics skills?

IV. Comprehension and Fluency

A. Comprehension

The reading teacher

1. Understands the relationship between students' background knowledge and comprehension
 - a. assessment of students' prior knowledge (KWL chart, semantic map)
 - b. strategies to activate students' prior knowledge
 - c. strategies to build students' background knowledge for unfamiliar subject matter
2. Understands that vocabulary is an important part of comprehension
3. Understands the relationship between comprehension and students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds
4. Understands how to use systematic and explicit instruction to develop comprehension skills (i.e., self-monitoring, using graphic organizers and story structures, generating questions, and summarizing)
5. Understands that students should use multiple strategies to enhance reading comprehension
 - a. when and why to apply a particular strategy
 - b. self-monitoring strategies
6. Understands the role of language structures of text (e.g., sentence, phrase, paragraph) in comprehension
7. Understands the role that features of text (e.g., headings, subheadings) play in comprehension
8. Understands how to use genres of written text that have recognizable structures to enhance comprehension
9. Understands how to use writing activities to support reading comprehension
10. Knows how to model effective strategies for comprehending a variety of writing styles, such as narrative, expository, descriptive, and persuasive
11. Knows how to choose appropriate text for students, taking into account interest and ability level
12. Understands effective formal and informal methods to assess students' reading comprehension

B. Fluency

The reading teacher

1. Understands that fluency with all components of reading acts as a bridge to the comprehension of text
2. Understands that oral reading fluency consists of accuracy, appropriate rate, automaticity, and prosody (i.e., intonation, expression, and flow)
3. Understands that fluency in the different components of reading can be developed through various strategies such as blending, repeated use of word lists, phrases, and passages at appropriate instructional levels
4. Understands how to use effective instructional strategies to improve oral reading fluency
5. Understands how to use formal and informal methods of assessing reading fluency

Discussion areas: Comprehension and Fluency

- How can writing activities be used to support reading comprehension?
- In what ways do students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds affect comprehension?
- What factors should be taken into account when choosing texts for students?
- What instructional strategies can be used to improve oral reading fluency?
- What is the relationship between fluency and comprehension?

V. Vocabulary

The reading teacher

1. Knows how to model the use of context as a strategy to confirm word meaning
2. Understands how common prefixes, suffixes, and roots affect the meaning of English words
3. Understands basic word relationships such as synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms
4. Understands how to use direct and indirect methods to teach vocabulary
5. Understands how to select appropriate words for vocabulary instruction
6. Understands how grammatical functions and word forms affect meaning
7. Understands the importance of both offering a wide range of reading opportunities and providing materials with rich contextual support for vocabulary development
8. Understands how to assess and monitor vocabulary knowledge

Discussion areas: Vocabulary

- What criteria should be used when selecting words for vocabulary instruction?
- How can teachers model the use of context as a strategy to confirm word meaning?
- How do common prefixes, suffixes, and roots affect the meaning of English words?

VI. Instructional Processes

A. Instructional Practices

The reading teacher

1. Creates a learning environment that supports literacy development by incorporating motivational strategies that encourage active student engagement
2. Understands a variety of strategies to differentiate instruction

B. Curriculum Material

The reading teacher

1. Recognizes the differences in kinds of texts and their various uses
2. Understands how to select instructional materials that reflect societal diversity
 - a. multicultural texts
 - b. recognition of stereotypes
3. Understands how to integrate appropriate technology to support literacy instruction
 - a. educational software
 - b. word processing
 - c. digital storytelling
 - d. multimedia
 - e. audio books
 - f. educational blogs

C. Assessment

The reading teacher

1. Understands how to use a variety of types of assessments
2. Uses assessment data to inform instruction
3. Communicates students' progress in reading to stakeholders (i.e., parents and administration)

Discussion areas: Instructional Processes

- How can teachers use assessment data to inform their instruction?
- What are effective ways to communicate students' reading progress to stakeholders (i.e., parents and administration)?

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*[®] 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* tests at 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 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/plne_accommodations/.

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.

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.

You can find additional information on available resources for test takers with disabilities or health-related needs at 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)
- 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)
- 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.

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 for the most up-to-date information.

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

The *Praxis* 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.

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.

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 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.

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 *Praxis* test or other *Praxis* tests in 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
- *The Praxis Passing Scores* (PDF), found at www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand
- State requirements, found at 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 for professional licensing.

Do all states require these tests?

The *Praxis* 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.

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* tests?

Your state chose the *Praxis* 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* test development process. First, ETS asked them what 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 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 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

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

www.ets.org/praxis/store

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