



2009 New York Q & A

Administrative Questions

Q: When are the makeup dates?

A: The information for makeup testing can be found in Appendix C of the 2009 *School Administrator's Manual for Public and Nonpublic Schools*. It is the principal's responsibility to facilitate testing of the students who did not complete the test on the regularly scheduled testing dates. This document can be found on the State Education Department's website at:

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/sam/ela-sam-09.pdf>

Q: What are the criteria for choosing scoring committee members?

A: A good candidate for an ELA scoring committee should have the following capabilities: English language arts expertise, experience with scoring open-ended questions (including the use of rubrics), and one or more years of teaching the specified or adjacent grade levels to be scored. Additional recommendations for selecting scorers can be found in the 2009 *School Administrator's Manual for Public and Nonpublic Schools*.

Q: How are scorer numbers assigned?

A: Each scorer and scoring committee will have been assigned a number; your site coordinator should provide you with a roster with these numbers on it. These numbers are a way of identifying scoring committees in order to provide feedback when conducting read-behinds.

Q: Is there a source for obtaining additional test materials or training materials?

A: The 2009 *School Administrator's Manual for Public and Nonpublic Schools* lists the materials needed for testing and the corresponding sources of assistance to obtain materials.

Q: What are the duties of a scribe?

A: When a student is allowed the accommodation of a scribe, the scribe must record word for word what the student says. Additional information about scribes can be found in the 2009 *School Administrator's Manual for Public and Nonpublic Schools*.

Q: When the students read the passages and directions may they use “whisper phones”?

A: Students are not allowed the use of whisper phones on the test unless they have an IEP or 504 plan that indicates this testing accommodation.

Q: Can our Spanish teacher score papers?

A: A Spanish teacher may score responses written in English; however, he/she may not translate student responses that are written in Spanish. The English Language Arts Condition Codes state that responses are scored zero if the entire response is written in a language other than English.

Q: What should be done with the CAS answer sheets after training is completed?

A: It is a local decision whether to keep them or destroy them.

Q: How many scorers are required to score each test book?

A: Regardless of the scoring model being used, a minimum of three scorers is necessary to score each student's test book.

Q: What should be done if student answer sheets have been soiled or mutilated in some manner?

A: The school must transcribe all student information and test responses onto an unused answer sheet, which is then added to the stack. Do not fold, bend, tape, or staple any answer sheets. Two staff members are required for this—one person to transfer the answers and one person to check that the answers have been transferred accurately. (Please see page 31, #7, in the 2009 *School Administrator's Manual for Public and Nonpublic Schools*.)

General Scoring Questions

Q: Is it possible to see specific common errors/neutral revisions for the editing paragraphs in grades 3, 5, and 7?

A: Yes. Common changes that students made on the field tests are provided on the training audio files for each grade level, as well as in the printed scoring materials. These changes are internalized more quickly when the scorers can write down the possible changes and hear the explanations for scoring them.

Q: When does a response receive a score of zero?

A: Cluster responses are given a zero if the entire response is illegible or scribbled, consists of an indication of a student's refusal to respond, is written in a language other than English, or corresponds to a description of zero in the ELA Scoring Considerations or scoring rubrics.

Q: If a student's response is blank, how should it be scored?

A: In grades 4, 6, and 8, condition code A is applied if every question in a cluster is left blank. In grades 3, 5, and 7, the short-response questions are scored individually; for those items, condition code A is applied if the question is left blank.

Q: If a student is absent, how is that student's test scored?

A: If a student is absent and has not had the opportunity to do a makeup test, fill in the absent circle for that session on the student's answer sheet.

Q: How should a paper that has been totally erased be scored when the student's response can still be read?

A: If a response in grades 3, 5, or 7 is totally erased, then the response is considered blank, which is a Condition Code A. In grades 4, 6, or 8, all responses within a cluster must be blank or erased to receive a Condition Code A.

Q: What does "include details" in a question mean?

A: This means that the students need to include specific information from the passages in their responses that addresses the question/prompt being asked. Students often have background information or life experiences regarding a topic and use that to answer questions rather than information from the text. Since the questions are assessing whether students have read and understood the information presented, it is necessary for students to reference specific information from the passage.

General Cluster Information

Q: In the Reading/Writing session of Grades 4, 6, and 8, can a cluster response be given a top score if only one of the passages is referenced in the extended response?

A: No. To receive a top score (4 points in Grade 4 and 5 points in Grades 6 and 8), the extended response must contain references to both passages. However, please remember that the clusters are scored holistically and the other requirements for a top score response must also be met in order to achieve a top score.

Q: If a cluster demonstrates voice, is it possible that the cluster may not receive a top score?

A: Yes. The cluster should be scored holistically and assigned scores on the basis of the entire cluster. The lower-point clusters may contain elements of top score responses, which may include voice.

Q: Is one relevant detail in any item of the cluster sufficient to give the entire cluster a score of 1 and not a zero?

A: Yes. The cluster may receive a score of 1 if any part of the cluster correctly responds to the task. To be given a score point of zero, the entire cluster must be completely incorrect, irrelevant, or incoherent. Also, note the scoring considerations: if a student answers only one question, and that question is *not* the extended response, the score is zero.

Q: How is a cluster scored when a student writes, “I don’t know” for each of the responses?

A: The cluster would receive a zero-point score. According to the English Language Arts Condition Codes, responses are scored a zero if the entire response consists of an indication of the student’s refusal to respond.

Q: Why do the training materials for scoring Writing Mechanics for Grades 4, 6, and 8 reflect the Sample Test instead of the current operational test?

A: Since the principles of scoring Writing Mechanics remain the same regardless of the questions posed to the students, the training materials for this section of the test may be considered generic and can be used from year to year.

Q: When scoring Writing Mechanics, are the students expected to write out numbers?

A: No. It is acceptable to write the numeral instead of the word (see Grade 8 Writing Mechanics, Practice Set 1A and 1B).

Guide to zero-score point cluster responses:

- If the student answers only one extended-response question, the score is zero.
- If a student is absent for one of the two books, thus answering only one extended-response question, the score is zero.
- If the student copies the prompt for both extended responses and does not provide any original student writing, the score is zero.
- If the student copies the prompt and does not provide any original student writing for one of the extended responses, the score is zero, even if the student has original writing for the other extended response.
- If the student copies a portion of the reading passage and does not provide any original student writing, the score is zero, even if the student has original writing for the listening extended response.

Grade Specific Questions

Grade 3 Reading

Question 21

Correction: In the audio file for Grade 3, Question 21, two words are misspoken in the “other possible response” section. Please note that “ideas” must be plural for the student to receive credit for the first part of the answer. For example, the words “hundred ideas” or “hundreds ideas” would receive credit, but the words “hundred idea” or “hundreds idea” would not.

Q: If a student writes only that Harold carries his idea on a shirt or puts his idea on a shirt but does not mention the bag, is that sufficient to answer the second question?

A: Yes, that is acceptable.

Grade 3 Listening/Writing

Question 26

Q: In Question 26, if the student gives only fruit as the answer, would that receive partial credit?

A: No. An answer of fruit is too general and is incorrect, whether by itself or with another answer.

Question 27

Q: Why is it acceptable if a student says that Pete shares his food with Jamie?

A: It was decided by the rangefinding committee that due to the Listening aspect of this task and the grade level of the students that this answer was acceptable. The friendship between Jamie and Pete and Pete's lack of anger regarding the missing food seem to imply that he does not mind Jamie taking his food. Additionally, Pete was encouraging Jamie to try new foods. Therefore, the students viewed this as Pete sharing his food.

Question 28

General:

Please remember that students can correct the errors in the editing task in acceptable ways beyond what is described in the exemplars. This is noted in the scoring clarifications for the editing task. Please refer to and read through these clarifications carefully prior to scoring the editing task.

Q: If a student replaces the question mark after “again” with an exclamation point instead of a period, is that acceptable?

A: Yes, that would be considered another acceptable correction.

Grade 4 Listening/Writing

Q: Why was Listening Cluster 7 scored a 2 rather than a 1?

A: The student's response as a whole demonstrates some understanding of the text and provides some details from the text. The graphic organizer correctly contains several events from the story. Question 30 provides a version of the people's reaction in the story. The

people question the magical qualities of the bell because it does not ring. The extended response correctly explains the judge’s problem—there was more than one suspect. Although the rest of the response begins to lose focus, there are several elements of the plan included in the explanation. The responses as a whole address basic elements of the story.

Question 30

Q: Why is Practice Set 1B considered mostly complete and accurate?

A: Although the student’s answer does not refer to events right after the last suspect touches the bell, the events given do happen after. Since this is part of a holistic cluster, this slight misunderstanding of the question is acceptable.

Grade 4 Reading/Writing

Q: Why was Practice Set 1 given a score of 4 rather than a score of 3?

A: As a whole, the responses correctly and adequately address the prompts. The extended response is organized and shows some insightful thinking. The writing contains a sense of voice and some interesting vocabulary choices (i.e., “unfocused” and “hit the ground running”).

Grade 5 Reading

Question 21

Q: Why is the response “The fox saved the barn” considered too general for how the fox helps the farmer?

A: This response would receive full credit if it had described how the fox acted (he howled, he warns the farmer) or what the danger is to the barn (fire). A complete answer has specific references to the passage.

Grade 5 Listening/Writing

Question 26

Q: Could you please clarify the annotation for Practice Set 5? It seems that the paper describes Ryan’s reaction not what he does.

A: Yes, the annotation should be clarified. This paper describes why Ryan reacts as he does (“got shocked”) but does not describe what Ryan does after seeing the bass. The response is still only partially correct, and is scored a 1.

Question 27

General:

Please remember that students can correct the errors in the editing task in several acceptable ways beyond what is described in the exemplars. This is noted in the scoring clarifications for the editing task. Please refer to and read through these clarifications carefully prior to scoring the editing task.

Q: In CAS 16, has the student inserted a comma after the word “imagine” in the first line?

A: No. It is not a comma but a stray mark and is, therefore, ignored.

Grade 7 Listening/Writing

Question 35

General:

Practice Set 22: The annotation says there are 3 neutral revisions. One is noted as a neutral revision; the other two are noted under the original error section and are in regard to the student’s providing another acceptable way to correct the original error of a comma after “Higinbotham” in line 5. The student added the word “was” to form a complete sentence and deleted the comma. This is an acceptable alternative way of correcting the comma error.

Practice Set 23: In the 8th line of the editing task, the student has switched the comma and the closing quotation marks; this is a neutral revision since the use of a title within a non-restrictive element is considered above grade level.

Practice Set 25: In the 5th line of the editing task, the student has added parentheses around “an employee of Brookhaven National Laboratory” as well as crossed out the comma after “Laboratory”; this is another acceptable way to correct the original error.

Q: Why is the students' rewriting of "Nevertheless" (in the next to the last line of the editing task) as "Never the less" or "Neverless" considered incorrect? Isn't this a spelling error and therefore ignored?

A: This is considered a usage error, not a spelling error. The word "nevertheless" performs a specific function in the sentence.

Grade 8 Listening/Writing

Q: Why was Practice Set 1 given a score of 3 rather than a 2?

A: The student has demonstrated some understanding of the nature of Bernie Krause's work. The extended response describes several challenges he faced. There is an understanding of how he reacted ("he got up and kept recording") and some sense of what his goals were ("wants us to stop driving [cars] and flying [airplanes] so birds and have little birds").

Q: Why was Practice Set 2 given a score of 5 and Practice Set 5 only given a score of 4?

A: Although Practice Set 2 is a low score point 5, it is more sophisticated than Practice Set 5. PS2 contains an introduction and includes reflection from the student as well as a lot of voice. PS5 is more general and less developed and provides a more literal interpretation of the information in the article.

Grade 8 Reading/Writing

Question 32

Q: In Question 32, can a complete response reference just the cartoon's message rather than the cartoon specifically?

A: Yes, a complete response may only include a reference to the cartoon, whether specifically or indirectly (as long as the reference is clearly connected to the cartoon).