The University of the State of New York
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office of State Assessment
Albany, New York 12234

REGENTS COMPETENCY TEST IN READING
RESTRICTED EDITION
Directions for Administering and Scoring
August Administration

GENERAL INFORMATION

PLEASE NOTE: The Test Security Unit has issued a memorandum on Important Test Security Information. **Please see page 8.**

The Regents Competency Test in Reading is being provided in *restricted form*. Only students actually taking the test may read the questions in the test booklet. School personnel are ***not*** permitted to open an envelope containing a test booklet or to examine a test booklet for any reason other than to read questions to students with disabilities whose Individualized Education Programs call for this accommodation. **All test booklets, both used and unused, must be returned to the Department.**

The principal must certify that the restricted edition of the Regents Competency Test in Reading was administered in strict conformity with Regents regulations. Each teacher or proctor employed in the conduct of this test must, therefore, read with care the instructions for administering restricted exams contained in the *School Administrator's Manual*. In addition, each teacher or proctor administering a restricted test should become thoroughly familiar with the directions below.

The Regents Competency Test in Reading uses the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) test methodology to measure the student's ability to understand written material of varying levels of difficulty or readability.

The test consists of 10 nonfiction prose passages on a variety of topics. Each passage contains about 300 words. The passages are arranged in order of difficulty or readability, beginning with easy material and progressing to difficult material. The test questions are formed by the deletion of seven words in each passage. Each deleted word is indicated by a numbered, underlined blank space. For each deletion, the student is to select the most appropriate word from the five choices provided. There are 70 questions on the test.

Although the Regents Competency Test in Reading is scheduled for administration during a three-hour exam session, there is no time limit for the test. For most students, the working time for the test will be less than three hours. However, students should be given as much time as necessary to answer as many questions as they are capable of answering.

Do not permit any student to leave the testing room before the Uniform Statewide Admission Deadline, which in August is 9:15 a.m. for morning exams and 1:15 p.m. for afternoon exams.

Schools wishing to begin the exam earlier than the specified time may do so at the discretion of the principal. Regardless of the starting time, do not allow any student, under any circumstances, to hand in his or her test materials and leave the exam room before the Uniform Statewide Admission Deadline.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING RESTRICTED TESTS

1. ***Sealed Envelopes:*** Each restricted test booklet will be enclosed in a sealed envelope, which must be distributed to the student with the seal intact. Each student is to break the seal of the envelope at the time designated. **Deputies, proctors, and teachers are *not* permitted to open a test envelope or to read the questions in a test booklet for any reason, except as noted above.**

   A gummed blue label is included in each restricted test envelope for use in resealing the envelope. As each student finishes the test, he or she should be told to:

   a. Replace *ONLY* the test booklet in the envelope so that the booklet number printed in the lower left corner of the test booklet appears in the window of the envelope.

   b. Remove the backing from the gummed label and apply the label across the flap in the space outlined by dotted lines.

   c. Sign his or her name across the label and onto the envelope.

2. ***Answer Sheet:*** The hand-scorable answer sheet on which students are to record their answers is the last page of the test booklet.

   At the end of the test, collect the answer sheets separately from the test envelopes. Scoring the answer sheets is a responsibility of the school.

3. ***Safeguarding Test Booklets:*** Take extreme care to ensure that all copies of the restricted test can be accounted for at all times. If necessary, make a written record of individual booklet numbers to accompany the transfer of the test envelopes from the principal to the principal's deputies. **Do not leave copies of tests unattended under any circumstances.**

4. ***Replacement of Defective Booklets:*** If a student receives a defective test booklet, the proctor should provide the student with a new envelope if one is available. (If no extra envelope is available, please call 518-474-8220 for instructions.) After receiving the new envelope, the student should break the seal and write the new test booklet number on the answer sheet above the old number. The student should then seal the defective test booklet in its original envelope. The proctor should write "CONTAINS DEFECTIVE BOOKLET" on the sealed envelope. Report all defective booklets in writing to the State Education Department. Include the name of the student and the booklet number.

5. ***Errors in Envelope Procedure:*** If a student inadvertently seals the answer sheet in the envelope or seals the envelope without enclosing the test booklet, the proctor should have the student open the envelope and remove the answer sheet or enclose the test booklet. The student should then reseal the envelope with tape. The proctor should note on the front of the envelope the reason for reopening the envelope. Report all errors in envelope procedure in writing to the State Education Department. Include the name of the student, the booklet number, and the reason for the irregularity.

6. ***Test Materials to Return to the Department:*** All test booklets must be returned to the Department, unused booklets in the sealed envelopes and used booklets in envelopes with the gummed label properly attached and signed.

7. Please see the Use of Communications Devices policy on the next page to ensure that students do not have any communications devices with them while taking this test.

SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING THE RESTRICTED REGENTS COMPETENCY TEST IN READING

Make sure that each student has a writing implement and that the desks have been cleared of books and papers.

The policy on the use of communications devices is provided below. The directions to students on the use of communications devices and all other directions enclosed in boxes should be read verbatim to the students.

Use of Communications Devices

All students are prohibited from bringing cell phones and certain other electronic devices, as defined in the script below, into a classroom or other location where a State exam is being administered. Test proctors, test monitors, and school officials shall retain the right to collect and hold any prohibited electronic devices prior to the start of the test administration. Admission to the test shall be denied to any student who is in possession of a cell phone or other prohibited electronic device and refuses to relinquish it.

At the beginning of each test administration, proctors must read the following statement to all students taking secondary-level State exams:

You cannot have any communications device, including a cell phone, with you during this exam or during any breaks (such as a restroom visit). Such devices include, but are not limited to:

- Cell phones
- Blackberry devices and other PDAs
- iPods and MP3 players
- iPads, tablets, and other eReaders
- Laptops, notebooks, or any other personal computing devices
- Cameras or other photographic equipment
- Headphones, headsets, or in-ear headphones such as earbuds, and
- Any other device capable of recording audio, photographic, or video content, or capable of viewing or playing back such content

If you brought any of these items to the building today, and have not already stored it in your locker or turned it over to me, a test monitor or school official, you must give it to me now. You may not keep your cell phone or any of these items with you, or near you, including in your pockets, backpack, desk, etc. If you keep a cell phone or any of these items with you, your exam will be invalidated and you will get no score. Is there anyone who needs to give me any of these items now?

[Proctor: repeat list of devices.]

This is your last opportunity to do so before the test begins.

For Principals and Proctors:

a. Any student observed with any prohibited device while taking a State exam must be directed to turn it over to the proctor or monitor immediately. To allow for all possible outcomes of procedural due process, the student should be allowed to complete the exam. The incident must be reported promptly to the school principal. If the principal determines that the student had a prohibited device in his or her possession during the test administration, the student's test **must** be invalidated. No score may be calculated for that student.

b. The incident must be promptly reported, in writing, to the Office of State Assessment via fax to 518-474-1989 or by e-mail to emscassessinfo@nysed.gov, as is the case for all student-related testing irregularities, misadministrations, or other violations of State testing policy and procedures.

Note: Some students with disabilities may use certain recording/playback devices ONLY IF this accommodation is specifically required as a provision of the student's IEP or 504 Plan. In addition, a student may be allowed to retain an otherwise prohibited device in his or her possession if there is documentation on file at the school from a medical practitioner that the student requires such a device during testing. Without such documentation, the general policy on communications devices as provided above is in effect, and the school may not allow the student to retain any such equipment while testing.

After reading the directions to students on the use of communications devices, the proctor should say:

> I am now going to distribute the envelopes containing the test booklets. Do *not* open the envelope until you are directed to do so. A blue label is included in the envelope. When you finish the test, follow the directions printed on the blue label.

Distribute one test envelope to each student individually to be sure that each student receives only one envelope.

Then say:

> Print your name and your school name on the envelope in the space provided. *(Hold up an envelope and show the students where they should print their name and the name of their school.)* Do not open the envelope until I tell you to do so.

Next say:

> Open the envelope by sliding a pencil under the sealed flap and remove the test booklet. *(Pause.)* Open the test booklet to the last page, which is a detachable answer sheet, and detach this answer sheet from the booklet. The test booklet number appears in the lower left corner of the test booklet cover. Enter this number at the top of your answer sheet on the line *above* the word "Student."

After this has been completed, say:

> Read the information on the cover of the test booklet. Be sure your test has the correct title, day, date, and time. *(Pause.)* Open your test booklet to page 3 and read the directions and sample questions.

Review with the students the manner in which they are to take the test. To aid proctors in helping students understand the test-taking procedure, the "Directions to Students" that appear on page 3 of the test booklet are reproduced on page 7 of this publication. Make sure that each student understands the directions, the sample questions, and how to mark the answer sheet.

Then say:

> Are there any questions? *(Pause.)* Remember that all answers must be recorded on the answer sheet.

Now say:

> You will have as much time as you need to finish this test. Turn to page 4 and begin work.

No one, *under any circumstances*, may interpret or explain exam questions to students, nor may anyone review or comment on the answer paper of a student while an exam is in progress. In response to inquiries by students concerning the meaning or interpretation of exam questions, proctors should advise students to use their own best judgment.

As each student finishes the test and before he or she seals the envelope, make sure that the student has:

1. Completed the heading and signed the declaration.
2. Placed only the test booklet in the envelope so that the booklet number appears in the window of the envelope.
3. Written his or her name and the name of the school on the appropriate lines on the envelope.

After each student has sealed the envelope securely, make sure that the student places the blue label across the flap in the outlined space and signs his or her name across the blue label and onto the envelope.

After all students have handed in their test materials, put the envelopes in numerical order and return ***all*** envelopes to the principal. The principal should store all envelopes in locked Regents boxes.

NOTE: No one, *under any circumstances*, including the student, may alter the student's responses on the test once the student has handed in his or her test materials. Teachers and administrators who engage in inappropriate conduct with respect to administering and scoring State exams may be subject to disciplinary actions in accordance with Sections 3020 and 3020-a of Education Law or to action against their certification pursuant to Part 83 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

DIRECTIONS FOR SCORING

> **NOTE:** The RCT in Reading must be rated by two teachers to ensure the accuracy of the scores. Teachers are **not** permitted to score their own students' answer papers.

The restricted edition of the Regents Competency Test in Reading must be scored without reference to the test booklet. The scoring key and the following directions give all the information necessary for scoring.

Scoring the Answer Sheet

Hand Scoring: The scoring key has been printed on translucent paper in the same format as the answer sheet. On the key, boxes have been printed to indicate correct answers; when the key is aligned properly with the answer sheet, each correct answer will be visible in a box.

Before scoring each answer sheet, check it to make certain that the student has marked only one answer for each question. If two or more answers have been marked, draw a horizontal line with colored pencil through all of the answer circles, so that no credit will be allowed for that question in scoring. Place the key over the answer sheet so that the box indicating the correct answer for each question corresponds to the row of answer circles for that question. Be sure that the appropriate scoring key is being used.

To obtain the raw score, count the number of correct answers. Record the student's raw score (total number correct) in the box provided in the upper right corner of the answer sheet.

To determine whether the student has attained a passing score, refer to the scoring key accompanying the test. For each test administration, the number of correct answers required for a passing score will be printed on the key.

When the teacher scoring is completed, test scores must be considered final and must be entered onto students' permanent records.

Principals and other administrative staff in a school or district do not have the authority to set aside the scores arrived at by the teachers and rescore student test papers or to change any scores assigned through the procedures described in these directions and in the scoring materials provided by the Department. Any principal or administrator found to have done so, except in the circumstances described below, will be in violation of Department policy regarding the scoring of State exams. Teachers and administrators who violate Department policy with respect to scoring State exams may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Sections 3020 and 3020-a of Education Law or to action against their certification pursuant to Part 83 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

On rare occasions, an administrator may learn that an isolated error occurred in the calculation of a final score for a student or in recording students' scores in their permanent records. For example, the final score may have been based on an incorrect summing of the student's raw scores. When such errors involve the final scores on any RCT of no more than five students and when such errors are detected within four months of the test date, the superintendent of a public school district or the chief administrative officer of a nonpublic or a charter school may arrange for the corrected score to be recorded in the student's permanent record. However, in all such instances, the superintendent or chief administrative officer must advise the Department in writing that the student's score has been corrected. The written notification to the Department must be signed by the superintendent or chief administrative officer and must include the names of the students whose scores have been corrected, the name of the exam, the students' original and corrected scores, and a brief explanation of the nature of the scoring error that was corrected.

If an administrator has substantial reason to believe that the teacher scoring committee has failed to accurately score the answer papers for more than five students on any RCT or when errors are detected more than four months after the test date, the administrator must first obtain permission in writing from the Department before arranging for or permitting a rescoring of student papers. The written request to the Department must come from the superintendent of a public school district or the chief administrative officer of a nonpublic or charter school and must include the exam title, date of administration, and number of students whose papers would be subject to such rescoring. This request must also include a statement explaining why the administrator believes that the teacher scoring committee failed to score appropriately and, thus, why he or she believes rescoring the exam papers is necessary. As part of this submission, the school administrator must make clear his or her understanding that such extraordinary re-rating may be carried out only by a full committee of teachers constituted in accordance with the scoring guidelines presented above and fully utilizing the scoring materials for this test provided by the Department.

The Department sometimes finds it necessary to notify schools of a revision to the scoring key and rating guide for an exam. Should this occur after the scoring is completed, the principal is authorized to have appropriate members of the scoring committee review students' responses only to the specific question(s) referenced in the notification and to adjust students' final exam scores when appropriate. Only in such circumstances is the school not required to notify or obtain approval from the Department to correct students' final exam scores.

Regents Competency Test in Reading

Page 3 of Student's Test Booklet

This test contains several reading passages. In each passage, some words are missing. Wherever a word is missing, there is a blank line with a number on it. Next to the passage you will find the same number and five words. Choose the word that makes the best sense in the blank.

On your answer sheet, find the same number as the blank. Fill in the circle that has the same letter as the word you have chosen. Mark only one answer for each question. If you want to change an answer, be sure to erase your first mark completely. Then mark the answer you want.

Find Samples **I** and **II** on your answer sheet. Read Sample **I** below and see how the right answer has been marked on your answer sheet. Then read Sample **II** and mark the answer on your answer sheet.

SAMPLES

The United States once had just thirteen states. This ___**I**___ has changed. Now there are 50 states.

I a) trade b) road c) store d) number e) food

Years ago, there were no electric lamps. People had to ___**II**___ their homes differently. One way to do this was with candles.

II a) light b) shape c) paint d) enter e) buy

On the separate answer sheet, look at the row of answer circles for Sample **I**. The circle for letter **d** is marked because the word **number** makes the best sense in the blank.

In the row of answer circles for Sample **II**, you should have marked the circle for letter **a** because the word **light** is the word that makes the best sense in the blank.

As you can see, you may not be sure of the answer to a question until you have read the sentences that come after the blank. So be sure to read enough to answer the questions.

As you work on this test, you will find that the passages become harder to read. Do your best to read as many passages as you can and to answer as many questions as you can. Your score will be based on the number of questions you answer correctly.

When you are told to start working, turn the page and begin. You will be given as much time as you need. Remember, mark all your answers on the separate answer sheet, and mark only one answer for each question.

THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Test Security Unit, 964 EBA, 89 Washington Ave., Albany, NY 12234

IMPORTANT

BEFORE YOU ADMINISTER THE REGENTS EXAMINATIONS OR REGENTS COMPETENCY TESTS (RCTs) PLEASE REVIEW THIS IMPORTANT TEST SECURITY INFORMATION

The State Education Department is committed to the integrity of the New York State Testing Program. We appreciate your commitment and professionalism as we strive to ensure the fairest administration and scoring of Regents Exams and RCTs. Please accept this reminder of prohibited testing conduct.

Under Section 102.4 of the Commissioner's Regulations, prohibited testing conduct includes:

- Accessing secure test booklets and/or answer sheets prior to the time allowed by testing rules.
- Reviewing test booklets prior to test administration in order to: determine and record correct responses for use during testing; create pre-test lessons or discussions with students about concepts being tested; or create a "cheat sheet" for students to use during testing, including sharing formulas, concepts, or definitions, necessary for the test.
- Providing students clues or answers during testing, including coaching students about correct answers, defining terms and concepts contained in the test, pointing out wrong answers, suggesting that a student reconsider or change a recorded response, reminding students during testing of concepts they learned in class, or making facial or other non-verbal suggestions to students regarding answers.
- Giving a student more time to take the test than is allowed for that student under State regulations.
- Leaving materials displayed in the room containing topics being tested.
- Writing test specific formulas, concepts or definitions on the board prior to or during testing.
- Reviewing an answer sheet for wrong answers and returning it to the student to change responses.
- Altering, erasing, or changing a student's recorded responses after the student hands in test materials.
- Engaging in rescoring of any portion of a test to add points, unless authorized by State rules.
- Encouraging or assisting anyone to engage in the above-described conduct.

Some potential consequences of engaging in prohibited testing conduct include:

- The test score of the affected student will likely be invalidated.
- The affected student may have to retake the exam.
- The person who intentionally engaged in testing misconduct could face sanctions and discipline, including termination and/or the loss of his/her New York State educator certification(s).

In accordance with Section 102.4 of the Commissioner's Regulations you are required to report any known incident of testing misconduct to the Test Security Unit. Reports may be made by filing an Incident Report Form at http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tsei/.