

REGENTS COMPETENCY TEST IN READING

Directions for Administering and Scoring January and June Administrations

GENERAL INFORMATION

PLEASE NOTE: The Test Security Unit has issued a memorandum on Important Test Security Information. **Please see page 5.**

The general procedures to be followed in administering all Regents Competency Tests (RCTs) are contained in the *School Administrator's Manual*. This manual also provides information concerning modifications in testing procedures for students with disabilities and alternative testing procedures for students whose native language is other than English. School personnel are permitted to read the test to students with disabilities whose Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Accommodation Plans (504 Plans) call for this accommodation.

Although the RCT in Reading is scheduled for administration during a 3-hour exam session, there is no time limit for the test. For most students the working time for the test will be less than 3 hours. However, students should be given as much time as necessary to answer as many questions as they are capable of answering.

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE TEST

Test Description

The RCT 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 a total of 70 questions on the test.

Answer Sheet

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

SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING THE TEST

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 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 on the next page, 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 examination 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 examination. 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 OSA 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.

Distribute the test booklets face up, one to each student so that the students can read the information on the front cover of the booklet. Instruct the students to open their test booklets to the last page, which is a detachable answer sheet, and to detach this answer sheet from the booklet.

Have the students turn to page 3 and read the directions and sample questions. Explain to the students the manner in which they are to record their answers on the separate answer sheet. Make sure that each student understands the directions and the sample questions and how to mark the answer sheet. Remind students that all of the answers must be recorded on the separate answer sheet.

After all the students' questions about the directions have been answered, tell the students that they will be allowed as much time as they need to finish the test. Then instruct the students to turn to page 4 in the test booklet and to 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 the students to use their own best judgment.

As students finish the test, they should sign the declaration on their answer sheets and then be allowed to hand in their test materials and leave the testing room. However, no student should be permitted to leave the testing room before the Uniform Statewide Admission Deadline, which is 10:00 a.m. for morning exams and 2:00 p.m. for afternoon exams during the January and June test administration periods.

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.

Determining the Passing Score

A student's raw score on the RCT in Reading is the total number of questions that the student answers correctly. There is no penalty for wrong answers. The raw score that a student must obtain in order to pass the RCT in Reading is printed on the scoring key. *Because the passing score may vary from one test administration to another, it is crucial that for each January and June test administration, the scoring key be consulted to determine the appropriate passing score.*

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, scan 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 given 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 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 for parts of the test or from a misreading of the conversion chart. 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 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 more than five student answer papers 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.



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/>.