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

# REGENTS COMPETENCY TEST IN SCIENCE
# Restricted English and Alternative Language Editions
# Directions for Administering and Scoring

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**PLEASE NOTE:** The Test Security Unit has issued a memorandum on Important Test Security Information. **Please see page 10.**

The Regents Competency Test (RCT) in Science is provided in English and alternative language editions. All editions are 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 the test to students with disabilities whose Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Accommodation Plans (504 Plans) call for this accommodation. **All test booklets, both used and unused, and all scrap paper must be returned to the Department. Student answer papers should be kept on file in the school for one year. Photocopying and/or retaining copies of the test booklet are strictly prohibited.**

The principal must certify that the restricted editions of the RCT in Science were administered in strict conformity with the rules for their administration. Each teacher or proctor employed in the conduct of this test must, therefore, read with care the instructions for administering exams contained in the current edition of the *School Administrator's Manual*. In addition, each teacher or proctor administering restricted forms should become thoroughly familiar with the directions below.

The RCT in Science contains a total of 70 questions. There are 69 multiple-choice questions for which the student is to select the correct answer from among the four choices given and one completion question for which the student is to provide the answer.

Although the RCT in Science 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 three hours. However, students should be given as much time as necessary to answer as many questions as they are capable of answering.

Proctors must not permit students to leave the testing room before the Uniform Statewide Admission Deadlines:

**Uniform Statewide Admission Deadlines**

| | Morning Exams | Afternoon Exams |
|---|---|---|
| January/June | 10:00 a.m. | 2:00 p.m. |
| August | 9:15 a.m. | 1:15 p.m. |

## GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING RESTRICTED EDITIONS

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 described in these directions.**

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.* Put all scrap paper inside the front cover of the test booklet.

*b.* Place the test booklet (but not the answer sheet) 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. The student's answer sheets should be kept outside of the envelope so that school personnel may score them.

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

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

2. ***Answer Sheets*:** A hand-scorable answer sheet is printed as a detachable last page of the test booklet. Instruct students to detach this answer sheet from the test booklet prior to beginning work. Students are to record their answers to questions 1 through 69, which are multiple-choice questions, on the front of this answer sheet. Question 70 is a completion question. It may require students to construct a data table, complete a graph, explain a described activity, or demonstrate mastery of other core science process (inquiry) skills. Students are to write their response to completion question 70 on the reverse side of the answer sheet.

   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. The answer sheets may be hand scored using the scoring key provided by the Department.

3. ***Safeguarding Test Booklets:*** Take extreme care 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 test booklets unattended *under any circumstances!***

4. ***Use of Scrap Paper:*** Students must record all answers to the test questions on the appropriate answer sheet. However, they may use scrap paper as well as the blank spaces of the test booklet to work out the answers to the questions. The student's name and test booklet number must appear on each sheet of scrap paper. The school is responsible for providing scrap paper for the test takers.

   After finishing the test, each student must put all scrap paper (used and unused) inside the front cover of the test booklet before putting the booklet inside the envelope. No scrap paper should be left on any desks. Proctors must take special care to see that no student leaves the examination room with scrap paper in his or her possession.

5. ***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.

6. ***Errors in Envelope Procedures:*** If a student inadvertently seals an answer sheet in the envelope or seals the envelope without enclosing the test booklet and/or scrap paper, the proctor should have the student open the envelope and remove the answer sheet or enclose the test booklet and scrap paper. 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.

7. ***Test Materials to Be Returned to the Department:***
   a. ***Test Booklets—***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.
   b. **Scrap Paper**—Each student should place his or her scrap paper inside the front cover of the test booklet before placing the test booklet in the test envelope.

## SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING RESTRICTED EDITIONS

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 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 Individualized (IEP) or Section 504 Accommodation Plan (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.

Follow the procedures below when administering restricted editions to students. For the alternative language editions, explain the procedures to the students in the appropriate alternative language, if possible. If you do not speak the alternative language, describe each step slowly and clearly in English, demonstrating whenever possible.

1. Make sure that the desks have been cleared of books and papers and that each student has a pencil and scrap paper.
2. Distribute one test envelope to each student. Hand the test envelope to each student individually to be sure that each student receives only one envelope.
3. Hold up an envelope and show the students where they should print their name and the name of the school.
4. Show the students how to open the envelope by sliding a pencil under the sealed flap. The students should take out the test booklet and place the envelope (containing the blue label) on one side of their desk.
5. Ask students to check the front cover of their test booklet to ensure that they have the correct exam title.
6. Instruct the students to open their test booklet to the last page, which is a detachable answer sheet, and to detach this answer sheet from the booklet.
7. Instruct the students to write their test booklet number on the heading of the detachable answer sheet and to fill in the rest of the heading. In addition, have them write their name and test booklet number on each sheet of scrap paper.
8. The proctor should check to be sure that all documents are properly identified.
9. Ask the students to read the information on the front of the test booklet. After they finish reading the information, instruct them to turn to page 3 and read the directions and sample question on that page. For students using an alternative language edition, the instructions to students may begin on page 2 rather than 3. As an aid to proctors, printed on page 8 of this publication is the English translation of the "Directions to Students" that appear inside the test booklet.
10. Make sure that each student understands the directions, the sample question, and how to mark the answer sheet. Remind the students that while they may use scrap paper and the blank spaces of the test booklet to work out answers to the questions, they must record all answers on the answer sheet.
11. Tell the students that they will have as much time as they need to finish the test and that they should raise their hand for help when they finish. Ask the students if they have any questions. After all questions have been answered, tell the students to turn to page 4 and begin working.
12. As the students work on the test, check to see if they appear to understand all directions and are marking their answer sheets properly.
13. 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 questions by students concerning the meaning or interpretation of exam questions, proctors should advise students to use their own best judgment.
14. As each student finishes the test and before he or she seals the envelope, make sure that the student has:
    *a.* Completed the heading on the answer sheet correctly.
    *b.* Signed the declaration on the answer sheet.
    *c.* Written his or her name and test booklet number on all scrap paper.
    *d.* Placed the scrap paper inside the front cover of the test booklet.

*e.* Placed **only the test booklet and scrap paper** in the envelope so that the booklet number appears in the window of the envelope.

*f.* Written his or her name and the name of the school on the appropriate lines on the envelope.

15. 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.
16. After all students have handed in their test materials, put the envelopes in numerical order and return ***all*** of them to the principal. The principal should then store all envelopes in locked Regents boxes.

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.

## GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR SCORING RESTRICTED EDITIONS

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

Restricted editions of the RCT in Science must be scored without reference to the test booklet. The scoring materials provided for the test and the directions below contain all information necessary for scoring the test.

Take care that the correct scoring key is used. Each form of the test will have a different scoring key.

A student's raw score on the RCT in Science is the total number of questions that the student answers correctly. **The minimum passing score is 65%, which is a minimum of 46 correct answers.** Page 7 of these directions contains a table for converting the number of correct answers to the percent correct.

### Hand Scoring the Answer Sheet

The scoring key for each form of the test has been printed on translucent paper in the same format as the answer sheet. This key is appropriate for scoring all editions of the test—English, alternative languages, and braille.

Score the student's response to completion question 70. **Credit for the open-ended response to Question 70 must be clearly marked on the answer sheet.** For an answer requiring a table or graph, accept only those variations given on the scoring key.

Record the student's score for question 70 in the field on the reverse side of the answer sheet as follows:

- Indicate that credit has been given for a correct answer to completion question 70 by darkening the circle for choice 1.
- Indicate an incorrect answer (no credit) by darkening the circle for choice 2. If the student has not answered a question, leave the circles blank.

  After coding the answer for completion question 70, scan each answer sheet to make certain that the student has marked only one answer for each question. If a student has marked two or more answers, draw a line with colored pencil through all the answer circles so that no credit will be allowed for that question in scoring. Place the scoring 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. When the key is aligned properly with the answer sheet, each correct answer will be visible in a box.

To obtain the total raw score, count the number of correct answers for multiple-choice questions and for completion question 70. Record the student's total raw score (total number correct) in the box provided in the upper right corner of the answer sheet.

When the teacher rating 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 initials or student identifications (at the discretion of the principal) 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.

## RETURNING MATERIALS TO THE DEPARTMENT

After the scoring has been completed and an accurate record has been made of all students' scores, return all envelopes containing test booklets (both used and unused) and all scrap paper to the Department in the Regents box. Arrange the envelopes in numerical order. **Note that photocopying or retaining test booklets is strictly prohibited.**

Student answer sheets must be kept on file in the school for one year.

**CONVERSION TABLE: NUMBER OF CORRECT ANSWERS AND PERCENT CORRECT**

| Number Correct | Percent Correct | Number Correct | Percent Correct | Number Correct | Percent Correct | Number Correct | Percent Correct |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 70 | 100% | 52 | 74 | 34 | 49 | 16 | 23 |
| 69 | 99 | 51 | 73 | 33 | 47 | 15 | 21 |
| 68 | 97 | 50 | 71 | 32 | 46 | 14 | 20 |
| 67 | 96 | 49 | 70 | 31 | 44 | 13 | 19 |
| 66 | 94 | 48 | 69 | 30 | 43 | 12 | 17 |
| 65 | 93 | 47 | 67 | 29 | 41 | 11 | 16 |
| 64 | 91 | 46 | 66 | 28 | 40 | 10 | 14 |
| 63 | 90 | 45 | 64 | 27 | 39 | 9 | 13 |
| 62 | 89 | 44 | 63 | 26 | 37 | 8 | 11 |
| 61 | 87 | 43 | 61 | 25 | 36 | 7 | 10 |
| 60 | 86 | 42 | 60 | 24 | 34 | 6 | 9 |
| 59 | 84 | 41 | 59 | 23 | 33 | 5 | 7 |
| 58 | 83 | 40 | 57 | 22 | 31 | 4 | 6 |
| 57 | 81 | 39 | 56 | 21 | 30 | 3 | 4 |
| 56 | 80 | 38 | 54 | 20 | 29 | 2 | 3 |
| 55 | 79 | 37 | 53 | 19 | 27 | 1 | 1 |
| 54 | 77 | 36 | 51 | 18 | 26 | 0 | 0 |
| 53 | 76 | 35 | 50 | 17 | 24 | | |

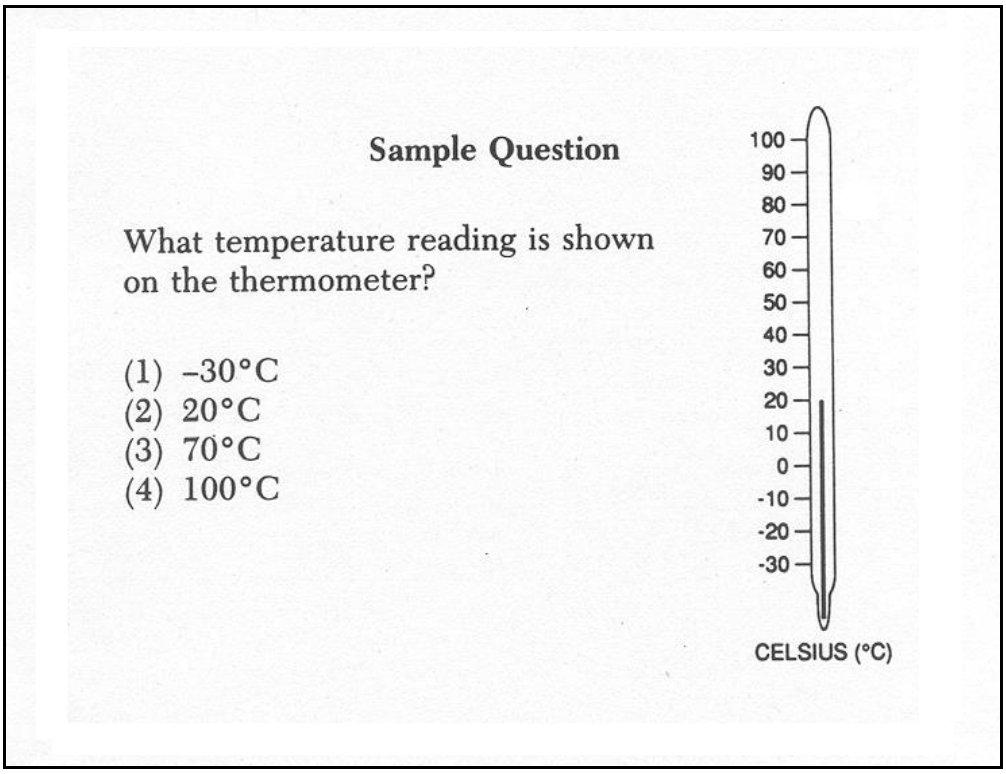
**RCT in Science—Restricted English Edition**

**Directions on Page 3 of Student's Test Booklet**

## DIRECTIONS TO STUDENTS

Questions 1 through 69 on this test are multiple-choice questions. Read each question carefully. Decide which of the choices given is the *best* answer, based on science principles. On your answer sheet, mark your answer in the row of circles for each question by filling in the circle that has the same number as the answer you have chosen.

Read the sample question below.




The correct answer is **20ºC**, which is choice number **2.** On your answer sheet for the multiple-choice questions, look at the box showing the row of answer circles for the sample question. Since choice number **2** is the correct answer for the sample question, the circle with the number **2** has been filled in.

Answer questions 1 through 69 on this test in the same way. 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. You may use scrap paper and the blank spaces on this test booklet to work out the answers to the questions, but be sure to mark all your answers for questions 1 through 69 on the separate answer sheet.

Answer question 70 in the space provided on your answer sheet. Specific directions for answering this question are given in the test booklet.

When you are told to start working, turn the page and begin with question 1. Work carefully and answer all the questions. Your score will be the number of questions you answer correctly.

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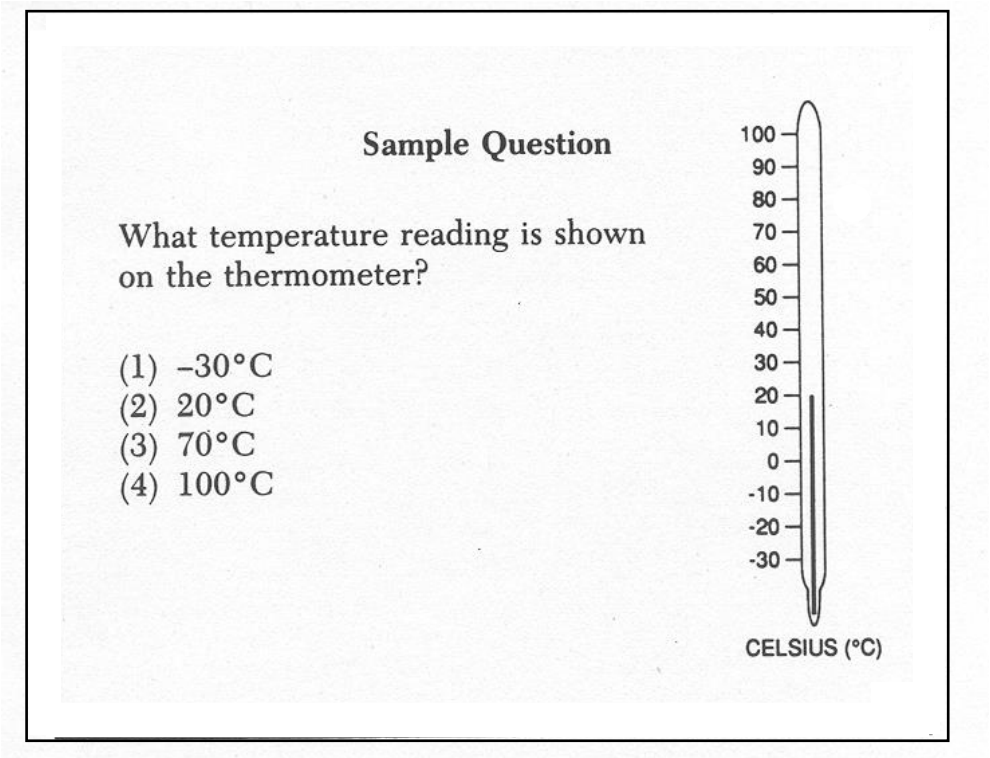
**RCT in Science—Restricted Alternative Language Editions**

**English Translation of "DIRECTIONS TO STUDENTS"**
**(may begin on page 2 or page 3 of student's test booklet)**

Questions 1 through 69 on this test are multiple-choice questions. Read each question carefully. Decide which of the choices given is the *best* answer, based on science principles. On your answer sheet, mark your answer in the row of circles for each question by filling in the circle that has the same number as the answer you have chosen.

Read the sample question below.




The correct answer is **20° C**, which is choice number **2**. On Side A of your answer sheet, look at the box showing the row of answer circles for the sample question. Since choice number **2** is the correct answer for the sample question, the circle with the number **2** has been filled in.

Answer questions 1 through 69 on this test in the same way. 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. You may use scrap paper and the blank spaces of this test booklet to work out the answers to the questions, but be sure to mark all your answers for questions 1 through 69 on Side A of your answer sheet.

Answer question 70 in the space provided on your answer sheet. Specific directions for answering question 70 are given in the test booklet.

When you are told to start working, turn the page and begin with question 1. Work carefully and answer all the questions. Your score will be the percentage of questions you answer correctly.

**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/.**