

## REGENTS COMPETENCY TEST IN READING

### RESTRICTED EDITION

#### Directions for Administering and Scoring August Administration

##### GENERAL INFORMATION

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 examinations contained in the current edition of *Regents Examinations, Regents Competency Tests, and Second Language Proficiency Examinations: 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 3-hour examination 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.

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 examinations and 1:15 p.m. for afternoon examinations.

Schools wishing to begin the examination 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 examination 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. See page 6 of this booklet for detailed instructions that must be followed to ensure that students do not use communications devices while taking this test.

### **SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING THE RESTRICTED REGENTS COMPETENCY TEST IN READING**

All directions enclosed in boxes should be read verbatim to the students. Make sure that the desks have been cleared of books and papers and that each student has a No. 2 pencil.

Then 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 booklets to the last page, which is a detachable answer sheet, and to 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 5 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 in pencil 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 examination questions to students, nor may anyone review or comment on the answer paper of a student while an examination is in progress.** In response to inquiries by students concerning the meaning or interpretation of examination 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 examinations may be subject to disciplinary actions in accordance with Sections 3018 and 3020 of Education Law.**

## DIRECTIONS FOR SCORING

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, 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. **There is no conversion chart for this test.**

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 for parts of the test or from a misreading of the conversion chart. When such errors involve no more than five students' final scores on any test and when such errors are detected within four months of the test date, the principal may arrange for the corrected

score to be recorded in the student's permanent record. However, in all such instances, the principal must advise the Office of Assessment Policy, Development and Administration (APDA) in writing that the student's score has been corrected. The written notification to the Department must be signed by the principal or superintendent 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 5% of the school's test takers for that exam or five students, whichever is greater, or when errors are detected more than four months after the test date, the administrator must first obtain permission in writing from APDA before arranging for or permitting a rescoring of student papers. The written request to APDA 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.

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#### SAMPLES

It was sunny and hot for days.  
Then the   **I**   changed. It turned  
cloudy and cool.

- I**    a) price                      b) road  
      c) job                        d) weather  
      e) size

It isn't safe to go out today.  
There was too much   **II**   yesterday.  
Many streets are flooded with water.

- II**    a) rain                        b) food  
      c) mail                     d) noise  
      e) work
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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 **weather** 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 **rain** 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.

## Use of Communications Devices

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

You may **not** use any communications device while taking a State examination, either in the room where the test is being administered or while on a supervised break (such as a restroom visit). Such devices include, but are not limited to, cellular telephones, pagers, CD and audiocassette players, radios, MP3 players, Personal Digital Assistants, video devices, and associated headphones, headsets, microphones, or earplugs.

If your cell phone rings or vibrates, you may not look at or answer it. You may not send, receive, or look at text messages. If your pager beeps or vibrates, you may not look at it. You must therefore turn these and other such devices **OFF right now and secure them underneath your desk** [or in the location specified by the principal]. You must not turn such devices back on until you have completed your examination, handed it in, and left the examination room. Your examination will be invalidated and no score will be calculated for you if you use any such device or related communications technology for any reason under any circumstances, or if you wear headphones while in the testing room.

*For Principals and Proctors:*

Any student observed to be using any communications device while taking a State examination must be directed to turn it off and put the device away immediately. In order 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 was using a communications device during the test administration, the student's test must be invalidated; no score may be calculated for that student.

The incident must be reported in writing to APDA, as is the case for all testing irregularities, misadministrations, or other violations of State testing policy and procedures.

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*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 Education Program or Section 504 Accommodation Plan. If not, the general policy on communications devices as provided above is in effect, and the school may not allow the use of any such equipment.