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

REGENTS COMPETENCY TEST IN READING
Directions for Administering and Scoring
January and June Administrations

GENERAL INFORMATION

The general procedures to be followed in administering all Regents Competency Tests are contained in the current edition of *Regents Examinations, Regents Competency Tests, and Proficiency Examinations: 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.

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.

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE TEST

Test Description

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 a total of 70 questions on the test.

Answer Sheet

A separate answer sheet is provided on which students are to record their answers. The answer sheet may be either hand scored or machine scored on NCS equipment. For purposes of machine processing, several grids containing spaces for recording various types of student identification information have been included on one side of the answer sheet. If the answer sheets are to be machine scored, uniform written instructions about the completion of these grids must be developed by the school and provided to all proctors administering the test. Such instructions should be based upon careful consideration of the types of student and score information the school needs to have, as well as upon the processing requirements of the scoring center that the school is using.

SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING THE TEST

Make sure that each student has a No. 2 pencil and that the desks have been cleared of books and papers. Distribute the separate answer sheets and give complete directions concerning completion of the heading and, if necessary for machine scoring, the marking of student identification grids.

After all students have provided the information requested on the answer sheet, 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. After the test booklets have been distributed, 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.

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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 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 examinations and 2:00 p.m. for afternoon examinations during the January and June test administration periods.

See page 4 of this publication for detailed instructions that must be followed to ensure that students do not use communications devices while taking this test.

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 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

Determining the Passing Score

A student's raw score on the Regents Competency Test 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 Regents Competency Test 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.

Machine Scoring: Each answer sheet should be scanned to be sure that the student information grids and the answer circles for the multiple-choice questions have been filled in with heavy pencil marks and that all stray marks have been erased. For the convenience of scoring centers, a list of correct answers is printed on the hand-scoring key. Schools should be sure to check with their scoring center concerning the procedure to be followed in preparing the answer sheets for scoring.

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 examinations.

Teachers and administrators who violate Department policy with respect to scoring State examinations 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 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 State Assessment 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 examination, 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 teachers scoring this test have failed to accurately score more than five student answer papers, the administrator must first obtain permission in writing from the Office of State Assessment before arranging for or permitting a rescoring of student papers. The written request to the Office of State Assessment 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 examination 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 teachers failed to rate appropriately and, thus, why he or she believes rescoring the examination papers is necessary. As part of this submission, the school administrator must make clear his or her understanding that such extraordinary rerating may be carried out only 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 examination. 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 examination scores when appropriate. Only in such circumstances is the school not required to notify or obtain approval from the Department to correct students' final examination scores.

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.
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> 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 the Office of State Assessment, as is the case for all 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 Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Accommodation Plan (504 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.