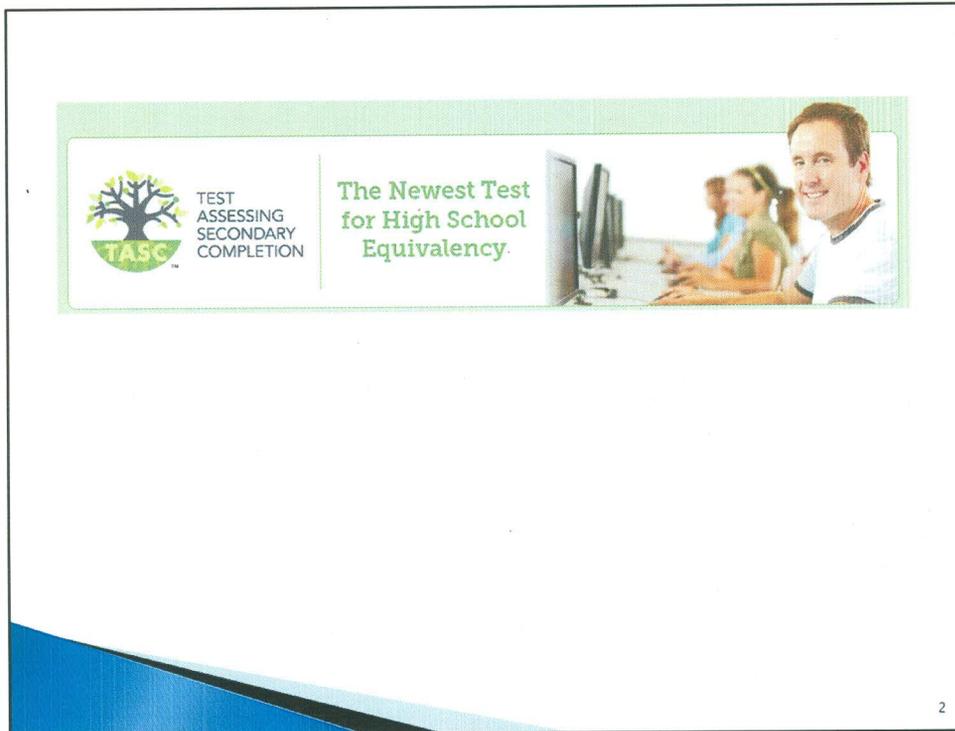


The High School Equivalency Exam in New York State

English Language Arts and Social Studies for the
Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC™ test)

The new high school equivalency exam (HSE), the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC™ test) adopted by the Board of Regents is being administered effective January 2014.

In this presentation, we will take a brief look at the test using examples from the sample items available at the TASC™ test website, the Standards being measured, the Standards labeling system and Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK).



The TASC™ test, developed by CTB McGraw-Hill for national use, measures the Common Core in English Language Arts and Mathematics, the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for Science, and the Social Studies national frameworks.

TASC™ test Overview

- ▶ Secure assessment
- ▶ High School Equivalency (HSE)
- ▶ Practice materials

3

The TASC™ test is a secure exam that indicates whether examinees have knowledge in core content areas equivalent to that of graduating high school students. It comes in three forms in both English and Spanish.

The Readiness Test, produced by CTB McGraw-Hill, is half the length of the TASC™ test and is available to test preparation centers in both computer-based and paper-based formats. Practice materials to assess TASC™ test readiness are available to test preparation centers.

Measurement of Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

- English Language Arts
- Literacy in History and Social Studies.

4

The TASC™ test measures the College and Career Readiness Standards in adult education and is aligned with the Common Core.

The Common Core provides the tool to prepare learners for academic and career pathways.

Principles of the CCSS

- College and career readiness
- Based on research

The CCSS set requirements for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, Technical Subjects, and Mathematics as well as understandings required for college and career readiness in the disciplines. Although somewhat new to adult education, the Common Core is an opportunity for quality learning. College and Career Readiness Standards in adult education forge a strong link with the world of work and provide adult learners with the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to pursue long-term career aspirations and goals. The standards provide adult educators with greater clarity of what is expected and what students need to master as they prepare for college and/or careers. These sets of standards are evidence- and research-based.

College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standards for Reading

Key Ideas and Details

- ▶ 1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- ▶ 2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- ▶ 3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

- ▶ 4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- ▶ 5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

- ▶ 6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- ▶ 7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.*
- ▶ 8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
- ▶ 9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

- ▶ 10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

6

Please scan through this slide.

The College and Career Readiness or CCR Standards define what students should understand and be able to do. The CCR provide broad standards, while the grade-specific standards provide additional specificity and together they define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate.

In this case the Standards provide specific focus and coherence in reading for both literary and informational texts, including History and Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

Label System of the Standards

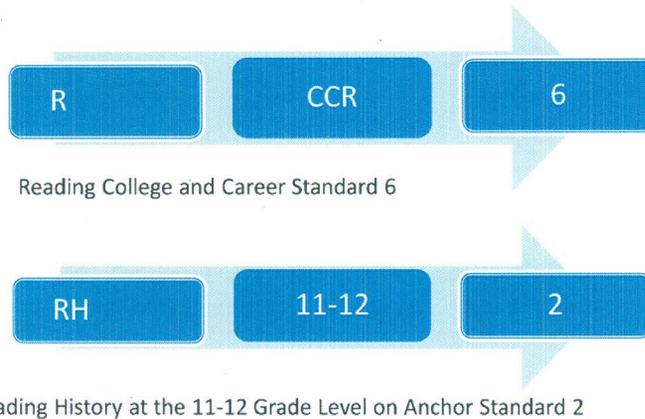
RI- Reading Informational Text
RL- Reading Literature
RH- Reading Historical/Social Studies Text
RST- Reading Scientific and Technical Text
RF- Reading Foundations
W- Writing
WHST- Writing for History/Social Studies, Scientific and
Technical Subjects
SL- Speaking and Listening
L- Language

7

As previously noted, the Standards for English Language Arts are separated into four strands: Reading (“R”), Writing (“W”), Listening (“L”), and Speaking (“S”).

Learning the labels for the Standards will assist examinees and teachers with understanding the organization and application of the Standards.

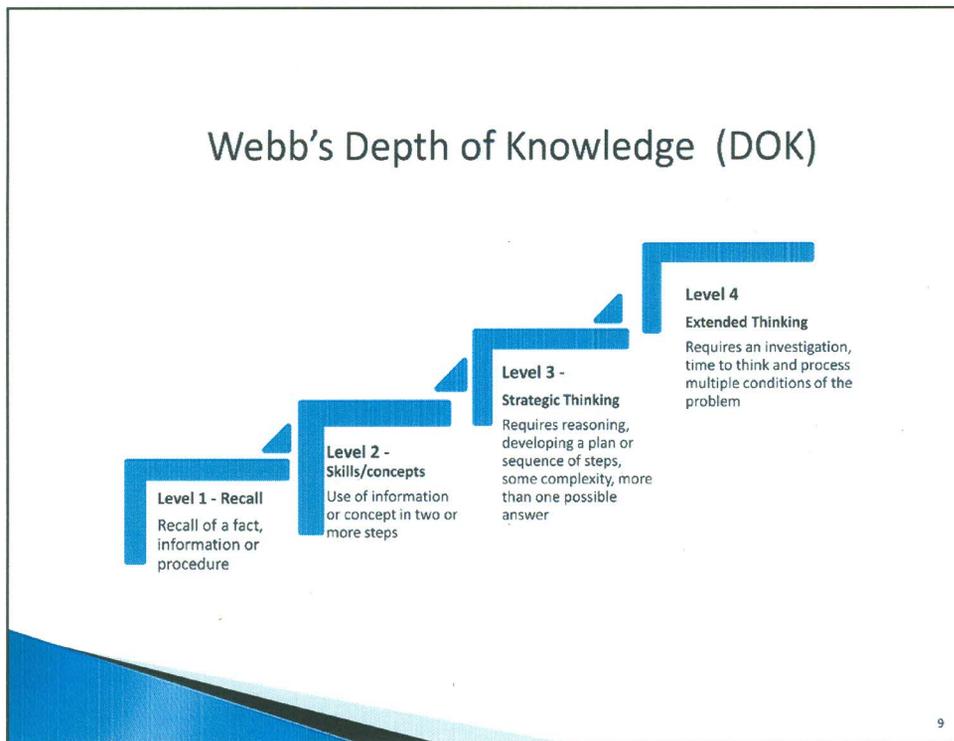
Understanding the Label System of the Standards



8

Individual CCR Anchor Standards can be identified by their strand, CCR status, and number. For example, R. CCR.6 means, Reading, College and Career, Standard 6. On the slide the 2nd example is a grade specific standard that shows the strand, grade level, and number (if a letter is applicable, it would follow the number).

RH 11-12.2 stands for Reading Historical text, Grade 11-12, Standard 2. This particular standard requires students to “determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationship among the key details and ideas.”



The TASC™ test uses Webb's Depth of Knowledge, or DOK, to measure the cognitive complexity of questions. In addition to understanding the CCSS, the Standards labeling system, the shifts, and the components of TASC™ test, having a grasp of Webb's DOK will contribute to understanding the cognitive complexity of the TASC™ test items. DOK offers a common language to understand "rigor," or cognitive demand, in assessments, as well as curricular units, lessons, and instruction.

There are four DOK levels:

Level 1: Assess examinees' recall of specific facts and definitions.

Level 2: Assess examinees' ability to apply skills and concepts and use information in a two-or-more step process.

Level 3: Assess examinees' ability to use complex and abstract thinking and connect ideas.

Level 4: Assess examinees' ability to use higher-order thinking to process multiple conditions of a problem and their ability to take material and information from one content area and apply it to another.

Test Session Time

Subject	Domain	Time Allotted
Language Arts	Reading	75 minutes
Language Arts	Writing	105 minutes
Social Studies		75 minutes

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We will now direct our attention to the Reading, Writing, and Social Studies subtests of the HSE exam. The TASC™ test is a timed test. The maximum length of time for one test session is approximately 9 hours. The approximate time for each subtest is listed on the slide. This table presents the 2014 allotted testing time for the subtests.

Social Studies Practices

- Gathering, Using, and Interpreting Evidence
- Chronological Reasoning and Causation
- Comparison and Contextualization
- Geographic Reasoning
- Economics and Economics Systems
- Civic Participation

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The Common Core literacy skills and Social Studies Practices include skills and habits of mind that show college and career readiness and use the Anchor Standards.

The six Social Studies Practices represent thinking skills in social science and history that students should develop to be prepared for civic participation and college and career readiness. The five Learning Standards for Social Studies that were adopted by the Board of Regents in 1996 - History of the United States and New York, World History, Geography, Economics and Civics, Citizenship, and Government - are assessed, in part, by the TASC™ test Social Studies Subtest.

TASC™ test – Social Studies

Domain/Reporting Category	Approximate Domain Coverage	Time to Complete	Number of Items
US History	25%	75 minutes	47 MC items 8 stimuli
World History	15%		
Civics and Government	25%		
Geography	15%		
Economics	20%		

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We will now look at the Social Studies Subtest in more detail. As previously noted, the TASC™ utilizes national Social Studies Standards. CTB McGraw-Hill created its Social Studies framework through analysis of several Social Studies national organizations/resources and state frameworks.

The TASC™ test emphasizes those national standards for Social Studies grades 9-12 that are most relevant to the CCR. These Standards serve as a consistent set of expectations for what examinees should learn and be able to do.

The 2014 and 2015 Social Studies Subtests are 75 minutes long and comprised of 47 items, 50% of which assess U.S. History, and civics and government. Another 30% of the items assess world history and geography, and the final 20% of items assess economics.

TASC™ test: Social Studies – High Emphasis

U.S. History: Civil War and Reconstruction (1850–1877)

Causes of the Civil War its effects on the American people
Reconstruction plans

Civics and Government: – U.S. Constitution, Foundations of the American Political System :

Organization and functions of national government
US Constitution, state government and the abuse of power
Relationship and responsibilities of national government and state and local governments
American political system
Judicial protection of individual rights
Public opinion in American politics
Media and American political life
Political parties, campaigns, and elections in American politics

Civics and Government: Civic Life, Politics, and Government

Civic life, politics, and government
Shared powers and parliamentary systems
Federal, confederal, and unitary systems of government

Economics: Government and Economics

Public policies and alternative public policies
Economic conditions and government policy makers
Inflation and unemployment
Federal government and the Federal Reserve System

Economics: Microeconomics

Shortage or surplus of product
Technology competition and levels
Economic institutions and market economy

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The Social Studies Subtest categorized domains for assessment in terms of high, medium, or low emphasis. Emphasis refers to the relative number of test items that will assess the given content domains. The TASC™ test emphasizes the targets for Social Studies that appear most frequently on CCSS for the specified domains.

This slide lists the domains of “High Emphasis” category in the 2014 and 2015 TASC™ test.

TASC™ test: Social Studies – Medium Emphasis

U.S. History: Development of the Industrial United States (1870–1900)

The rise of corporations, heavy industry, and mechanized farming; Immigration after 1870 and cultural diversity; American labor movement and social and economic changes; Federal Indian policy and United States foreign policy after the Civil War

Civics and Government: Role of the citizen in American Democracy

Citizenship in the United States; Naturalization; Personal, economic and political rights; Civic responsibilities in American constitutional democracy

Economics: Macroeconomics

Entrepreneurship in the United States; Investment decisions made by individuals, businesses, and governments; Earnings based on education, training, and career options

Economics: Basic Economics

Choices as consumers, producers, savers, investors, and citizens

Geography:

Places and Regions; Environment and Society; Human Systems

World History:

Age of Revolution (1750–1914); A Half-Century of Crisis and Achievement (1900–1945); 20th Century since 1945: Promises and Paradoxes; Post-World War II Reconstruction; Peace in an interdependent world

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For 2014 and 2015, domains in the “Medium Emphasis” will be assessed within the TASC™ test although there will be fewer questions measuring to these Standards.

TASC™ test: Social Studies – Low Emphasis

U.S. History: Revolution and the New Nation (1754–1820s)
Expansion and Reform (1801–1861)
The Emergence of Modern America (1890–1930)
Contemporary United States (1968 to the present)

Civics and Government:
Relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs

Economics: Trade and International Politics

Geography:
World in Spatial Terms
Physical Systems

World History:
Beginnings of Human Society
Early Civilizations and the Emergence of Pastoral People (4000–1000 BCE)
Classical Traditions, Major Religions, and Giant Empires (1000 BCE–300 CE)
Intensified Hemispheric Interactions (1000–1500 CE)
Expanding Zones of Exchange and Encounter (300–1000 CE)
Emergence of the First Global Age (1450–1770)

15

According to CTB McGraw-Hill, for 2014 and 2015, the “Low Emphasis” category will have no more than one or two items on any given subtest.

Social Studies Example
TASC Social Studies Test Sample Item 7

Social Studies Item Sampler

Excerpt from Item Test Sample

When the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person, or in the same body of magistrates, there can be no liberty. There is no liberty, if the power of judging be not separated from the legislative and executive powers.

—Baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 1

16

This is a TASC™ test sample item from its web site. This item requires examinees to analyze the excerpt and determine its central idea. The next slide provides the answer choices.

Please read the Sample Item.

TASC™ test Social Studies Test Sample Item 7 Answer Key

Which principle of the United States government is described by this excerpt?

- A Individual rights
- B popular sovereignty
- C separation of power
- D separation of church and state

17

In this sample, examinees are expected to extract the essence of the basic principle of the United States government from the source.

TASC™ test Social Studies Test Sample Item 7 Answer Key

Answer: C
DOK: 2

Level 2 – Skills and Concepts

Categorize events or
figures in history into
meaningful groups

18

Answer Key: C

The correct response is choice C. While all answer choices are principles of the United States government, only answer choice C is described in the excerpt.

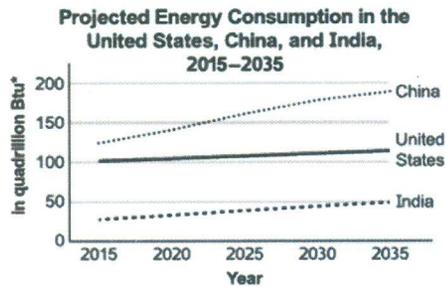
Although the TASC™ Social Studies uses national frameworks, the Literacy Standard for this item is Reading History at grades 11/12, Standard 2, which requires examinees to “Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source and/or provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.”

As mentioned previously, DOK is a tool to measure the cognitive complexity of questions. There are four levels in DOK. In this case, the complexity level is a 2. At this level, examinees are expected to:

- Determine or recognize main idea/generalizations
- Take and organize notes around common ideas/topics
- Summarize ideas/events
- Make basic inferences or logical predictions from text
- Explain relationships/cause and effect

Social Studies Example
TASC Social Studies Test Sample Item 11

Which of these explains how the changing demand for energy in China and India will most likely affect consumers in the United States?



- A. Consumers in the US will see prices for goods increase because the demand for energy will rise
- B. Consumers in the US will have higher energy costs because the demand for energy will decrease
- C. Consumers in the US will have lower energy costs because new energy resources will be created to meet the rising need.
- D. Consumers in the US will see prices for good decrease because suppliers will need to use less energy to produce goods.

Our next Sample Item requires examinees to analyze a line graph of projected energy use for three countries and integrate prior economic knowledge with the information presented to make a prediction about a long-term effect.

I will give you a minute to read the Sample Item.

TASC™ test Social Studies Test Sample Item 11 Answer Key

Answer : **A**
DOK: 3

**Level 3 – Strategic
Reasoning/Thinking**

Analyze
interrelationships
among text elements,
situations, events, or
ideas

20

The correct response is Choice A. The distractors (B, C, and D) are plausible to those examinees who have not mastered the concept of supply and demand and its effect on prices. However, Choice A accurately predicts the effects of increasing energy consumption on consumers in the United States.

The DOK level in this instance is Level 3. DOK 3 requires examinees to use concepts to solve problems:

- Analyze an essay.
- Compare information within or across text passages.
- Analyze interrelationships among text elements, situations, events, or ideas.
- Develop a model for a complex situation.
- Explain, generalize or connect ideas using supporting evidence from a text/source.

TASC™ test: Reading

Domain/Reporting Category	Approximate Domain Coverage	Time to Complete	Number of Items
Reading - Informational and Language (vocabulary acquisition)	70%	75 minutes	50 MC items 6 passages
Reading - Literary and Language (vocabulary acquisition)	30%		

21

The next subtest we will be looking at is Reading. The TASC™ emphasizes the Common Core State Standards for Reading for grades 9-12 that are the most relevant to College and Career Readiness.

TASC™ test: Reading

- Six texts
- Analytic reading
- Use of evidence

22

The TASC™ Reading subtest contains six texts that represent a variety of genres and have an emphasis on literary fiction and nonfiction, as well as historical, scientific, and technical informational texts. The texts require close, analytic reading and associated test items focus on the examinees' use of evidence to support their analyses, claims, conclusions, and inferences. Examinees must read all six passages and answer multiple-choice questions based on the particular passage. These questions address the examinees' ability to:

- Identify the central ideas of the text
- Identify details that support the key ideas
- Interpret the author's intent
- Use context clues to determine word usage

TASC™ test Reading Test Sample Item 3

Read this sentence from the passage.

On one of these sites, you might believe you are charging a pair of hiking boots, when you are actually providing some stranger with the information needed to book a flight to Acapulco on your credit card.

The author most likely included this sentence to

- A show that security systems are ineffective
- B dramatize how tricky some websites can be
- C suggest that irresponsible websites are on the rise
- D explain how easy it is to purchase something online

23

This is Sample Item 3.

Examinees must read the text closely to determine the idea the author is trying to develop, then identify how the target sentence contributes to this idea.

I will give you a minute to read the Sample Item.

TASC™ test Reading Test Sample Item 3 Answer Key

Answer: **B**
Standard: RI 9-10.5
DOK: 3

Level 3 – Strategic Thinking

Analyze or interpret
author's craft (literary
devices, viewpoint, or
potential bias)

24

The question requires examinees to analyze the effect of a sentence on the development of claims within a text. The correct response is Choice B. It correctly interprets the excerpt as having a dramatic effect to emphasize the trickiness of some websites, contributing to a key idea of the text as a whole.

The CCSS, (RI.9-10.5) for this item is grade specific. It is the Reading Informational text standard for grades 9-10, Standard 5. This particular Standard requires that examinees “Analyze in detail how an author’s ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text.”

The DOK level is a 3 which calls for strategic thinking:

- Analyze information within data sets or texts
- Analyze interrelationships between concepts, issues, and problems
- Analyze or interpret author’s craft (literary devices, viewpoint, or potential bias) to create or critique a text
- Use reasoning, planning and evidence to support inferences

TASC™ test Reading Test Sample Item 4

Read this sentence from the passage.

Spoofers often use a name that is just a few letters different from a legitimate site.

What does the word legitimate mean as it is used in this sentence?

- A accurate
- B believable
- C genuine
- D working

25

The task in Sample Item 4 is for the examinee to use context clues to determine the meaning of the identified word as it is used in the sentence.

TASC™ test Reading Sample Test Item 4 Answer Key

Answer: **C**
Standard: L.11-12.4a
DOK: 2

Level 2 –
Skills/concepts

Use context to identify
the meaning of words or
phrases

26

The correct response is Choice C which describes the opposite of a false or “spoofing” web site, the genuine web site.

The CCSS in this item is grade specific. It is the Language Standard for grades 11/12, Standard 4a. Standard 4 requires that examinees “Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple meaning words and phrases based on grades 11 and 12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.” Sub-standard A directs the “Use of context (e.g. the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text, a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.”

The DOK level is 2:

- Use context to identify the meaning of words or phrases
- Obtain and interpret information using text features
- Develop a text that may be limited to one paragraph
- Apply simple organizational structures (paragraph, sentence types) in writing

TASC™ test: Writing A Two-Part Writing Subtest

Part 1: Multiple Choice

Editing items assessing skills such as:

- Revising text structure
- Creating divisions to achieve more effective text organization that provides a more unified and clear meaning

27

The Writing Subtest of the TASC™ test is a two-part assessment.

For 2014, part one is multiple choice and focused on editing skills (Anchor Writing Standards). The Writing Subtest assesses whether examinees have learned to read and interpret complex text, anchor their interpretations in text, use reading to interpret unfamiliar vocabulary, use information from what they have read to support the ideas in their writing, and use skills and rules necessary for editing their writing.

In 2015, the test will also contain a few brief constructed response items.

Please note that for 2014 and 2015, the emphases for Math, Science Social Studies and Reading will be the same. However, for Writing, the areas of emphasis change from 2014 to 2015. Please refer to the TASC™ test website identified on the last slide for information regarding areas of emphases for all subject areas.

Examinees will...

- Edit sentences and paragraphs
- Revise sentences, paragraphs or a large document by:
 - ✓ Adding
 - ✓ Removing
 - ✓ Repositioning

28

Language arts skills such as revising sentences and paragraphs are addressed.

TASC™ test Writing Test Sample Item 1

Read these sentences.

Waiting for news about the flight delay, Sam looked for a quiet place in the noisy terminal to make a phone call. Jordan tried to find an outlet where she could plug in her computer.

Which revision most clearly combines the two sentences?

A Waiting for news about the flight delay, Sam, while Jordan tried to find an outlet where she could plug in her computer, looked for a quiet place in the noisy terminal to make a phone call.

B Waiting for news about the flight delay, Sam and Jordan looked for a quiet place in the noisy terminal to make a phone call and tried to find an outlet where she could plug in her computer.

C Waiting for news about the flight delay, Sam looked for a quiet place in the noisy terminal to make a phone call, while Jordan tried to find an outlet where she could plug in her computer.

D Waiting for news about the flight delay, Sam looked for a quiet place in the noisy terminal to make a phone call, although Jordan tried to find an outlet where she could plug in her computer.

29

Here is an example of a multiple-choice writing test item.

As you read through the slide, note that this item requires examinees' to recognize correct and incorrect examples of various types of phrases and clauses and to determine how their arrangement best conveys meaning and adds interest in a specific sentence.

TASC™ test Writing Sample Test Item 1 Answer Key

Answer: **C**
Standard: L.9-10.1b
DOK level: 2 (construct, modify)

Level 2 - Skills/concepts

Analyze format, organization, & internal text structure (signal words, transitions, semantic cues) of different texts

30

Answer Choice C effectively combines the ideas by subordinating the second sentence with an appropriate conjunction and placement of the clause.

ELA Standard 1b for grades 9 and 10 requires examinees to use various types of phrases and clauses to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing.

CTB categorizes this item as a DOK Level 2 item. Examinees are expected to apply their skills and knowledge of concepts. They must understand and process portions of a text, apply one concept, then make a decision before going on to apply a second concept.

At DOK level 2, examinees are expected to be able to:

- Categorize/compare literary elements, terms, facts/details, events
- Identify use of literary devices
- Analyze format, organization, and internal text structure (signal words, transitions, semantic cues) of different texts
- Distinguish between relevant-irrelevant information or fact/opinion
- Identify characteristic text features; distinguish between texts, genres

TASC™ test Writing Test Sample Item 2

Which of these sentences includes a misspelled word?

- A Bobby was ecstatic about heading into the city with his friends for a baseball game this weekend.
- B He also reassured his brother that he would bring him an extraordinary souvenir from the ballpark's gift shop.
- C The spring weather was already getting warm but had not become miserably hot yet—perfect weather for a baseball game!
- D Bobby had promised his little brother that he would take pictures of some of the star players, as well as attempt to aquire their autographs.

31

The task in this Sample Item is for the examinee to identify the misspelled word.

Please read the Sample Item.

TASC™ test Writing Test Sample Item 2 Answer Key

Answer: **D**
Standard: L.11-12.2b
DOK: 1

Level 1 – Recall

Apply rules or resources to edit spelling, grammar, punctuation, conventions, word use

32

The correct response is Choice D which has the word “acquire” misspelled without the “c”. The other answer choices contain words such as ecstatic, reassured, extraordinary, souvenir, and miserably that may attract examinees who are not proficient in spelling.

The CCSS in this item is grade specific. It is the Language Standard for grades 11/12, standard 2b. Standard 2 requires that examinees demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation and spelling; sub-Standard B specifies, “spell correctly.”

In this instance, the DOK is Level 1, there is only one answer, you either know it or you don't.

- Recall, recognize, or locate basic facts, details, events, or ideas explicit in texts
- Read words orally in connected text with fluency

TASC™ test Writing Test Sample Item 4

Read the paragraph.

An everyday hero is the average person who responds out of a sense of urgency to a situation that demands immediate action. The everyday hero recognizes that complacency is not an option. Risk to self is considered, but generally only after the fact.

Which sentence best concludes this paragraph?

- A The world is filled with many different kinds of heroes.
- B The actions define the hero as a giver, touching humanity in the process.
- C The everyday hero is the next-door neighbor who rescues the child from the oncoming car.
- D The size of the risk taken is of no matter to the hero because there is little time to consider the consequences.

33

Please read through this Sample Item.

The task in this item is for the examinee to select the correct sentence that concludes this paragraph.

TASC™ test Writing Test Sample Item 4 Answer Key

Answer: **D**
Standard: W.11-12.1e
DOK: 2

Level 2 – Skills/concepts

Apply simple organizational structures (paragraph, sentence types) in writing

34

This Sample Item assesses examinees' proficiency in providing concluding statements. It requires examinees to recognize the role of conclusions in writing and assess which responses are relevant and cohesive, as well as which responses do not provide the necessary information and finality.

The correct answer Choice is D.

This is another grade-specific standard. This Writing Standard, 11-12.1e, requires examinees "to provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented."

The DOK Level is 2. Level 2 assess examinees' ability to:

- Use context to identify the meaning of words or phrases.
- Obtain and interpret information using text features.
- Develop a text that may be limited to one paragraph.
- Apply simple organizational structures (paragraph, sentence types) in writing.

TASC™ test: Writing

Part 2: Writing

- Essay
- Source texts
- Rubrics
- 50 minutes

35

The second part of the TASC™ Writing Subtest provides examinees with source texts of approximately 600-800 words and requires them to write either a persuasive or explanatory essay using evidence from the texts to support their claim. Examinees are permitted 50 minutes for this component which focuses on Writing Standard W.1 or W.2.

The writing is holistically scored, by two raters, on a 0-4 rubric, for a total of eight possible points. To pass the Writing subtest, an examinee must score at least a two out of eight on the essay, in addition to the minimum of 500 on the multiple-choice component.

There is a rubric with descriptors that focus on the expectations of the CCSS for Writing.

TASC™ test Sample Writing Prompt

There is an ongoing debate in the public domain as to whether free public libraries are still practical in today's world. What are the implications for society of a "free" public library system? Has the time come for cities to consider requiring patrons to pay a fee to use library services?

Weigh the claims on both sides, and then write an argumentative essay supporting either side of the debate in which you argue for or against the free library system. Be sure to use information from both texts in your argumentative essay.

Before you begin planning and writing, read the two texts:

1. The Worthwhile Investment in Free Public Libraries
2. Can We Afford "Free" Libraries?

As you read the texts, think about what details from the texts you might use in your argumentative essay. You may take notes or highlight the details as you read.

After reading the texts, create a plan for your argumentative essay. Think about ideas, facts, definitions, details, and other information and examples you want to use. Think about how you will introduce your topic and what the main topic will be for each paragraph.

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In this Sample Item, examinees must write an argumentative essay either for keeping libraries free to users or charging a user fee. They must support their claim using details and examples from the two texts associated with the prompt. Examinees must show that they can read critically, write fluently, and use language effectively.

TASC™ test Sample Writing Directions

Now write your argumentative essay.

Be sure to:

- Introduce your claim
- Support your claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence from the passages
- Acknowledge and address alternate or opposing claims
- Organize the reasons and evidence logically
- Use words, phrases, and clauses to connect your ideas and to clarify the relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence
- Establish and maintain a formal style
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented

37

To meet the Standards criteria, the bulleted list is provided to examinees on the exam to help them respond to the prompt. The TASC™ test essay scoring rubrics are holistic rubrics so all of the criteria (organization, development, content, etc.) are to be considered together when the essay is scored.

TASC™ test Informative/Explanatory Essay: Holistic Writing Rubric

Score: 0 The response is completely irrelevant or incorrect, or there is no response.

Score: 1 The response provides evidence of an attempt to write an essay that examines a topic.

- May not introduce a topic, or topic must be inferred
- Provides minimal information to develop the topic
- May be too brief to demonstrate an organizational structure
- Uses words that are inappropriate, overly simple, or unclear
- Provides a minimal or no concluding statement or section
- Has errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

Score: 2 The response is an incomplete or oversimplified essay that examines a topic.

- Attempts to introduce a topic
- Develops topic, sometimes unevenly, with mostly relevant information
- Attempts to use an organizational structure
- Uses simple language, which sometimes lacks clarity
- Provides a weak concluding statement or section
- May have errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

Score: 3 The response is a complete essay that examines a topic and presents information.

- Clearly introduces the topic to be examined
- Uses multiple pieces of relevant information to develop topic
- Uses an organizational structure to group information
- Uses clear word choice
- Uses words and/or phrases to connect ideas
- Uses an appropriate tone
- Provides a concluding statement or section that follows from the ideas presented
- Has few, if any, errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

Score: 4 The response is a well-developed essay that examines a topic and presents related information.

- Effectively introduces the topic to be examined
- Uses specific facts, details, definitions, examples, and/or other information to develop topic fully
- Uses an organizational strategy to present information effectively
- Uses precise and purposeful word choice
- Uses words, phrases, and/or clauses that effectively connect and show relationships among ideas
- Uses and maintains an appropriate tone
- Provides a strong concluding statement or section that logically follows from the ideas presented
- Has no errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

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This is the scoring rubric for the Informative/Explanatory essay.

The Opinion or Argument essay rubric is on the next slide.

TASC™ test Argument/Opinion Essay: Holistic Writing Rubric

Score: 0 The response is completely irrelevant or incorrect, or there is no response.

Score: 1 The response provides evidence of an attempt to write an essay that offers an argument.

- Weakly states or alludes to a claim
- Has minimal support for claim
- May be too brief to demonstrate an organizational structure
- Makes no attempt to acknowledge or counter opposing claims
- Uses words that are inappropriate, overly simple, or unclear
- Provides a minimal or no concluding statement or section
- Has errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

Score: 2 The response is an incomplete or oversimplified essay that develops and supports an argument.

- Attempts to establish a claim
- Develops, sometimes unevenly, reasons and/or evidence to support claim
- Attempts to use an organizational structure
- Makes little, if any, attempt to acknowledge or counter opposing claims
- Uses simple language, which sometimes lacks clarity
- Provides a weak concluding statement or section
- May have errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

Score: 3 The response is a complete essay that develops and supports an argument.

- Clearly introduces a claim
- Uses reasoning and evidence to support claim
- Uses an organizational structure to present reasons and relevant evidence
- Attempts to acknowledge and/or counter opposing claims, as appropriate
- Uses clear word choice
- Uses words and/or phrases to connect ideas
- Uses an appropriate tone
- Provides a concluding statement or section that follows from the ideas presented
- Has few, if any, errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

Score: 4 The response is a well-developed essay that develops and supports an argument.

- Effectively introduces a claim
- Uses logical, credible, and relevant reasoning and evidence to support claim
- Uses an organizational strategy to present reasons and relevant evidence
- Acknowledges and counters opposing claims, as appropriate
- Uses precise and purposeful word choice
- Uses words, phrases, and/or clauses that effectively connect and show relationships among ideas
- Uses and maintains an appropriate tone
- Provides a strong concluding statement or section that logically follows from the ideas presented
- Has no errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

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As with the Informative/Explanatory essay, the rubric is scored on a zero-to-four scale. A testing rubric that aligns with the scoring rubric is provided on the test as a guideline for the examinee.

Resources

Writing-Specific Resources:

- Video on evidence-based writing:

<http://www.regentsreviewlive.net/new/>

- All subjects: <http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/>

Background on evidence-based writing:

<http://education.jhu.edu/PD/newhorizons/Better/articles/Wintr2011.html>

CCR Standards (OVAE)

<http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/ovae/2013/04/22/college-and-career-readiness-ccr-standards-for-adult-education/>

TASC™ Website, including sample questions

www.TASCtest.com

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Some resources that may be useful are included on this slide. The TASC™ test questions are aligned with the expectations of the Common Core. Even though some of the questions may seem difficult, examinees are encouraged to do their best and not become discouraged.

Thank you for listening.