



RICA Written Examination Ultimate Guide

240 Tutoring, Inc ©

RICA, Reading Instruction Competence Assessment, and the RICA logo are trademarks, in the U.S. and/or other countries, of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing and Pearson Education, Inc. or its affiliate(s). This product is not endorsed or approved by CTC or Pearson.

Preparing to take the RICA?

Awesome!

We will answer every question you have and tell you exactly what you need to study to pass the RICA.

Table of Contents

Quick Facts

Domain 1: Planning, Organizing, and Managing Reading Instruction Based on Ongoing Assessment

- Overview
- Plan, Manage, and Organize Reading Instruction
- Reading Assessment
- Practice Questions and Answers

Domain 2: Word Analysis

- Overview
- Phonological and Phonemic Awareness
- Concepts About Print, Letter Recognition, and the Alphabetic Principle
- Phonics Instruction
- Phonics Knowledge/Skills and Sight Words
- Syllabic/Structural Analysis and Orthographic Knowledge
- Practice Questions and Answers

Domain 3: Fluency

- Overview
- The Role of Fluency
- Fluency Development
- Practice Questions and Answers

Domain 4: Vocabulary, Academic Language, Background Knowledge

- Overview
- The Role of Vocabulary, Academic Language, and Background Knowledge
- Development of Vocabulary, Academic Language, and Background Knowledge
- Practice Questions and Answers

Domain 5: Comprehension

- Overview
- Literal, Inferential, and Evaluative Comprehension
- Comprehension Instruction
- Comprehension of Narrative/Literary Texts
- Comprehension of Expository/Informational Texts and Study/Research Skills
- Practice Questions and Answers

Case Study

- Overview

Quick Facts

Overview:

The RICA, or Reading Instruction Competence Assessment, tests knowledge of effective reading instruction and the candidate's ability to apply that knowledge in five RICA domains:

1. Planning, Organizing, and Managing Reading Instruction
2. Word Analysis
3. Fluency
4. Vocabulary, Academic Language, and Background Knowledge
5. Comprehension

The purpose of the RICA is to assess the knowledge of California-trained candidates for Multiple Subject Teaching Credentials and Education Specialist Instruction Credentials (special education) in their knowledge, skills, and ability to deliver effective reading instruction to students.

Format:

The RICA written examination is a four-hour, computer-based test.

Take a look at the breakdown:

NAME	APPROXIMATE WEIGHTING	APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MULTIPLE-CHOICE ITEMS	NUMBER & TYPE OF CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE ITEMS	
			FOCUSED EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS & INSTRUCTIONAL TASKS	CASE STUDY
Domain 1	10%	10	0	
Domain 2	33%	24	1	
Domain 3	13%	8	1	1
Domain 4	20%	15	1	
Domain 5	23%	13	1	
	100%	70	4	1

Quick Facts

Cost:

\$171 for the entire test. (\$57 per subtest)

Scoring:

The passing score is 220. You must pass each subtest with a 220 to get credit for passing the RICA exam.

Individuals earn a raw score. The raw score is based on the total points received for answers. The raw score is then converted to a scaled score. The highest scaled score possible is 300 and the lowest possible is 100.

Points are allotted for questions answered correctly. If you do not know an answer, you can make an educated guess without endangering your score. There are no deductions for wrong answers.

Pass rate:

From 2010 to 2015, the first-time passing rate for individuals taking the RICA exam was 69.9%. The cumulative rate for passing the RICA, including multiple testing, is 90.7%.

Study time:

Study time will vary from person to person, but you should plan on allowing yourself several weeks to prepare. Plan to study until you feel comfortable answering all practice questions. It may be helpful to create a study schedule to ensure that you will have time to study each section of the test.

Tips that test takers wish they'd known:

Pay close attention to questions that include the words “not” or “except,” indicating that you need to choose the answer choice that does not fit the question.

Do not overthink the questions; there are no trick questions on the test.

There is no penalty for incorrect answers, so it is better to guess if you do not know an answer.

Double-check your answer before moving on to the next question.

Information obtained from the California Educator Credentialing Assessments website: <http://www.ctcexams.nesinc.com/Home.aspx>

Domain 1:

Planning, Organizing, & Managing Reading Instruction Based on Ongoing Assessment

Overview

Domain 1 has about 10 multiple-choice items.

This domain has two competencies:

- Plan, Organize, and Manage Reading Instruction
- Reading Assessment

Let's start with Plan, Organize, and Manage Reading Instruction.

Plan, Organize, and Manage Reading Instruction

This section tests your knowledge of planning, organizing, and delivering reading instruction that meets the needs of all students.

Let's discuss some concepts that will more than likely appear on the test.

Content Standards

Content standards are statements set forth by a governing body that dictate what students should learn at each grade level. The content standards referred to on the RICA are the English Language Arts (ELA) Content Standards or California Common Core State Standards. California reading teachers are required to implement these adopted Common Core State Standards when planning, organizing, and delivering reading instruction.

Differentiation of Reading Instruction

Differentiation, or differentiated instruction, is when teachers create learning opportunities for their students by pairing student characteristics to instruction and assessment. Teachers ensure that all students have access to the same classroom curriculum by providing scaffolding, learning tasks, and outcomes that are personalized to students' needs. It is not a strategy but an approach that incorporates a variety of strategies.

Teachers can differentiate in response to a student's skill level and background knowledge. Differentiation for a student can be based on topics of interest that motivate a student to learn. Differentiation can match a student's learning style, or learning profile, which may be visual, auditory, tactile, or kinesthetic. Differentiation also refers to the learner's grouping preferences, such as individual, small group, or large group. Environment preferences, like preferring lots of space or a quiet area to work, are also a way teachers can differentiate.

Teachers can differentiate content, process, and/or products for their students. When a teacher differentiates content, the material being learned is changed. For example, if the objective is for students to read short-vowel words, some may work to read one-syllable short-vowel words, while others may read multisyllabic short-vowel words. Differentiation of process refers to the way in which a student accesses material. One student may read e-books, while others may read printed books. Differentiation of product refers to the way in which a student demonstrates mastery. One student may give verbal responses, while other students may write their responses.

Flexible grouping is when students are intentionally and fluidly organized for different learning experiences over a relatively short period of time. These groupings are matched to task purpose and created by assessment results and other student characteristics. Groups may be formed and reformed according to specific goals, activities, and individual needs. Groups can be individuals, partners, small groups, or the whole class. Teachers may group students who do not understand a reading concept or skill. Students may be grouped with others who are reading on approximately the same reading level. They may be partnered with someone who reads at a higher reading level for modeling purposes.

Individualized instruction focuses on the needs of the individual student. Teachers target one specific need at a time. Some students who receive individualized instruction need remediation. Special education is an example of individualized instruction. Other students participating in individualized instruction may skip topics or skills they have mastered to advance or enrich the lesson.

During whole-class reading instruction, the teacher leads the direct instruction using traditional textbooks or reading materials with minimal differentiation. It is a good first step in the learning process before other instructional groupings occur.

Components of Effective Instructional Delivery

The orientation is the planning phase of the lesson. The teacher maps out learning opportunities for students to master the reading objective to be taught. The teacher considers the objective to be mastered along with relevant vocabulary, materials to be used, and outcomes. The teacher also gathers information such as student assessment results and thinks about students' learning needs. The teacher then scaffolds a plan for lesson delivery, considering appropriate grouping, differentiation, and scaffolding.

Guided practice is when the students practice the intended learning to master the objective with minimal assistance. As soon as the teacher observes that the student can perform the skill or objective to be mastered, the guided practice ends and independent practice starts.

Independent practice is the part of the lesson in which the student demonstrates mastery of the objective taught. During the application phase, the student uses the skill or objective mastered in a setting or text other than what was used to teach the lesson.

Reading Assessment

This section tests your knowledge of the main types of reading assessments.

Here are some concepts that you may see on the test.

Student Progress Monitoring

Student progress monitoring is periodic assessment of academic performance to measure a student's or group of students' rate of improvement, acquisition of a skill, or response to intervention and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction on the way to a goal. During progress monitoring, the teacher should focus on the reliability and type of evidence-based tools used, while also attending to cultural and linguistic responsiveness and recognition of student strengths.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessments evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit. Student learning is compared against a standard or benchmark.

Reading Levels

- Independent Reading Level - the level of text difficulty at which a reader makes very few errors with minimal or no help. Independent reading level is when a student reads a text at 95%-100% accuracy. Teachers should select reading material at a student's independent level for independent practice.
- Instructional Reading Level - the highest level in which a reader is not independent. The reader has sufficient background knowledge for a topic and can decode the text with few errors. The text is challenging but manageable for the reader.
 - At this level, teachers are able to assist students in acquiring independent reading skills. Instructional reading level is when a student reads a text at 90%-94% accuracy. The text is challenging enough for growth to occur without the reader becoming frustrated. Reading material at a student's instructional level is used when the teacher helps the student acquire a new skill or concept.
- Frustration Reading Level - the level at which text is too difficult for the student to read. If a student reads a text at an accuracy rate of below 90%, it is at the frustration level. Decoding the text is a hindrance to the student's comprehension. Frustration reading level text may be used with extensive support when the teacher is one-on-one with the student.

And that's some basic info about Domain 1: Planning, Organizing, and Managing Reading Instruction Based on Ongoing Assessment.

Now let's look at a few practice questions in each area to see how these concepts might actually appear on the real test.

Domain 1 Practice Questions

Question 1

Which of the following should serve as the foundation for reading programs in California?

- A. CSBE standards
- B. district planning documents
- C. student formative assessments
- D. structured and guided practice

Correct answer: A. The California State Board of Education provides standards that are the required elements of reading programs in California.

Question 2

What impact should the results of ongoing assessments have on instructional plans?

- A. They should not affect immediate plans, as the skills are unlikely to be related.
- B. They should only change future plans if the upcoming plans are directly related.
- C. They should change upcoming plans if goals are not met.
- D. The results should influence plans for the same unit in the following school year

Correct answer: C. Ongoing assessments are designed to affect future instructional plans. If the desired results have not yet been met, the teacher should change the instructional plans to better meet the students' needs.

Question 3

A kindergarten class has been working to learn all the letters and their corresponding sounds and will later learn about types of syllables and how those syllable types can affect the sounds letters make. Students who are not progressing as planned through the lessons on letter-to-sound correspondence most likely need differentiation in the form of

- A. complexity.
- B. pacing.
- C. scaffolding.
- D. background knowledge.

Correct answer: B. These students most likely need more time to practice and memorize the sounds each letter makes.

Question 4

A third-grade teacher incorporates fluency practice throughout the school year. Just before the end of the first semester, he uses the district-provided fluency assessment to assess each student's reading fluency and compares the results to the fluency assessment scores from the beginning of the school year. This assessment is an example of

- A. ongoing curriculum-based assessment.
- B. entry-level assessment.
- C. summative assessment.
- D. informal assessment.

Correct answer: A. An ongoing curriculum-based assessment is used to evaluate how the students are progressing in order to adjust instruction as necessary. The teacher will use the results of these fluency assessments to guide further fluency instruction in the classroom.

Question 5

While planning a vocabulary assignment for her sixth-grade class, Ms. Williams is considering how to best differentiate teaching for her advanced learners. Which of the following would mostly likely NOT be an appropriate differentiation technique for these students?

- A. increasing the number of the vocabulary words
- B. increasing the difficulty of the vocabulary words
- C. allowing student choice of vocabulary words
- D. providing options for how to demonstrate student understanding of vocabulary words

Correct answer: A. Increasing the number of words would increase the time it takes for the high-achieving students to complete the assignment, but it does not change the fact that they are likely completing the assignment with words that they already know the meanings of.

Domain 2:

Word Analysis

Overview

Domain 2 has about 24 multiple-choice items and one focused educational problem and instructional task (150-to-300-word response).

This domain has five competencies:

- Phonological and Phonemic Awareness
- Concepts About Print, Letter Recognition, and the Alphabetic Principle
- Phonics Instruction
- Phonics Knowledge/Skills and Sight Words
- Syllabic/Structural Analysis and Orthographic Knowledge

So, let's start with Phonological and Phonemic Awareness.

Phonological and Phonemic Awareness

This section tests your knowledge of the difference between, and the roles of, phonological awareness and phonemic awareness. It assesses your knowledge of research-based, systematic, explicit instruction to teach phonological awareness and phonemic awareness to meet students' needs, including English learners.

Let's discuss some concepts that will more than likely appear on the test.

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is the identifying and manipulating of sounds. It includes distinguishing and manipulating the sounds within a spoken word. Included in phonological awareness are parts of spoken words, spoken syllables, and spoken onsets and rimes.

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to focus on and manipulate individual phonemes, or sound units, in spoken words. It does not involve print, yet it is necessary for the learning of sound-print relationship, which is critical to proficient reading and spelling.

Onset/Rime

An onset is the initial phonological unit of any word. A rime is the string of letters that follow an onset, usually beginning with a vowel and the final consonants of the word. Let's look at some examples:

Word	Onset	Rime
dog	d	og
log	l	og
cat	c	at
fat	f	at

Concepts About Print, Letter Recognition, and the Alphabetic Principle

This section tests your knowledge of concepts about print, letter recognition, and the alphabetic principle, as well as how to promote students' development in these areas.

Here are some concepts that you may see on the test.

Concepts About Print

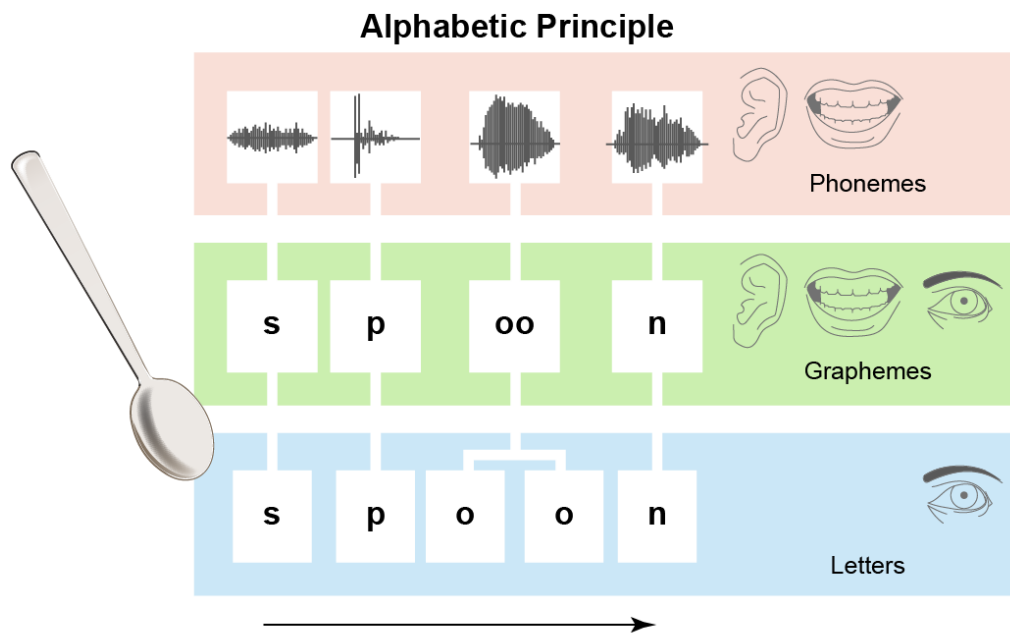
Concepts about print is the idea that for a given language, print is organized in a way to promote meaning. Let's take a look at some print concepts:

- Print conveys meaning and is used for different purposes.
- There is a relationship between speech and print.
- Print in English is read from left to right and from top to bottom.
- Letters and words are different. Letters make up words. Words are separated by spaces.

- Words and sentences are different. Words make up sentences. A sentence is a complete thought.
- Punctuation marks signal how to read and give meaning to sentences.
- Books have different parts, such as a front and back cover and title page.

The Alphabetic Principle

The alphabetic principle is the idea that letters and letter patterns represent sounds of spoken language. It is the understanding that there are systematic and predictable relationships between spoken sounds and written letters.



Phonics Instruction

This section tests your knowledge of the role of phonics and sight word instruction in reading development. You will be tested on your understanding of how accurate, automatic word recognition supports development in reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Here are some concepts that you may see on the test.

Types of Consonant Sounds

There are two basic sounds in the English language, vowels and consonants. When vowels are spoken, the mouth is open and vocal cords vibrate (or are voiced). Common vowels are the sounds of A, E, I, O, and U. Consonant sounds are sounds that are not vowels. When consonants are spoken, the mouth may be open and unvoiced, closed and voiced, or closed and unvoiced.

Let's look at the different types of consonant sounds:

- A digraph is two or more adjacent consonants that make one sound:
 - th as in mother
 - sh as in ship
 - ch as in church
 - ng as in king
- A blend is two or more adjacent consonants in which all the consonant sounds are heard
 - spr and nt as in sprint
 - bl and ck as in black
- Silent consonants are adjacent consonants in the same syllable where one or more of the consonant sounds are silent
 - kn as in knee
 - gn as in gnat
 - ght as in light

Vowel Digraphs

A vowel digraph is two adjacent vowels in the same syllable that make one sound. Take a look at these vowel digraphs:

- ai as in rain
- ee as in sheep
- oa as in boat
- ue and ay as in Tuesday

Vowel Diphthongs

A vowel diphthong is two adjacent vowels in the same syllable that make an unexpected sound. When the sound is spoken, the mouth moves more than one time. Take a look at these vowel diphthongs:

- oi as in coin
- oy as in toy
- aw as in paw
- au as in automatic

Vowel-R Combination or Bossy R

A vowel-r combination, or bossy r, is a vowel followed by an r. Vowel-r combinations make unique sounds.

- ar as in car
- ir as in bird
- ear as in hear
- ur as in turn

Common Word Patterns

Words are taught around common patterns such as syllables or onsets and rimes. A syllable is a word or part of a word with one vowel sound. There are six basic syllables:

- Closed syllable (VC) - A vowel followed by a consonant in a closed syllable is short.
 - hot, cat, fun, it
- Open syllable (V) - A vowel in an open, accented syllable is long.
 - hi, go, be
- Vowel, consonant, silent e (VCe)- A vowel is followed by a consonant and e, making the e silent and the vowel sound long.
 - make, bite, shake
- R-controlled (Vr) - A vowel followed by one r, not followed by another r, is an r-controlled sound.
 - car, stir, her, fur, for
- Vowel teams (VV) - Two adjacent vowels in the same syllable are a vowel digraph or diphthong.
 - Vowel digraphs - snow, team, stay
 - Vowel diphthongs - coin, boy, paw
- Final stable syllable (Cle) - A consonant followed by -le at the end of a word is always read the same.
 - little, pickle, uncle, cuddle

Phonics Knowledge/Skills and Sight Words

This section tests your understanding of how to instruct students in phonics and promote sight word automaticity.

Here are some concepts that you may see on the test.

High-Frequency Words

A high-frequency word is a word that is immediately recognized as a whole and does not require word analysis for identification. Good readers instantly recognize high-frequency words without having to decode them. Sight words are usually high-frequency words, which occur most frequently in our language. Two types of high-frequency word lists are the Dolch list and the Fry list.

Decodable Text

Decodable text is reading material used during beginning reading instruction that fits a certain phonics pattern being taught. It is designed so that beginning readers can use their newly-acquired phonics skills to practice decoding in context and begin to access meaning while decoding.

Syllabic/Structural Analysis and Orthographic Knowledge

This section tests your understanding of how reading and spelling development are affected by a reader's orthographic knowledge and ability to analyze syllables. Here are some concepts that you may see on the test.

Syllabic Analysis

Syllabic analysis is the study of syllable types and syllable division patterns to help students decode words. A syllable is a word or part of a word with one vowel sound. There are six basic syllable patterns in the English language (which we talked about earlier).

Beginning readers start by learning one-syllable words. Then they progress to two- and three-syllable words. Syllable division patterns are then introduced. Here decoding becomes more complex when some syllables are accented and some are unaccented.

Phonograms

Phonograms are groups of letters associated with a sound--think rhyming words. Teaching words in phonograms gives students consistency in learning to decode and spell.

- ight - might, light, bright, sight
- dge - edge, bridge, pledge, badge
- aught - taught, caught, naught

Orthographic Knowledge

Orthographic knowledge is stored memory that tells the student how to represent spoken language in written form. Orthography is the conventional spelling pattern of a language. It is putting sounds together to form words.

And that's some basic info about Domain 2: Word Analysis.

Now, let's look at a few practice questions in each area to see how these concepts might actually appear on the real test.

Domain 2 Practice Questions

Question 1

Which of the following skills is not part of phonological awareness?

- A. sound awareness
- B. letter awareness
- C. syllable awareness
- D. rhyme awareness

Correct answer: B. An understanding of the names and shapes of letters does not fall under the umbrella of phonological awareness. Phonological awareness is specifically focused on sounds.

Question 2

Which of the following statements correctly describes the relationship between phonemes and graphemes?

- A. A grapheme is a symbol used to identify a phoneme.
- B. A grapheme is the sound made by a phoneme.
- C. A phoneme is a two-letter grapheme.
- D. A phoneme is a type of grapheme.

Correct answer: A. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound within a word. Phonemes can be made up of one or more letters. A grapheme is a symbol representing the sound made by each phoneme. Some sounds (phonemes) can be spelled by different graphemes (spellings). For example, the sound /k/ can be spelled c, k or ck. Remembering that the word grapheme has “graph” in it can help you to remember that it is a symbol or visual representation, just like a graph.

Question 3

A teacher notices that a student has misspelled the words “pain” and “boat” as “pane” and “bote.” Based on this observation of the student’s spelling, which of the following would be a reasonable assumption for the teacher to make about the student’s decoding skills?

- A. The student may struggle to decode vowel digraphs.
- B. The student is unfamiliar with the vowel-consonant-e pattern.
- C. The student will be confused by words with silent letters.
- D. The student reads below grade level.

Correct answer: A. The student does not appear to know how to spell words that contain vowel digraphs, so it would be reasonable to assume that the student could be confused when he or she encounters words containing vowel digraphs in a text.

Question 4

Which of the following best describes the relationship between the development of spelling and decoding skills?

- A. Children generally develop decoding and spelling skills at the same time.
- B. Children typically learn to decode words significantly earlier than they are able to spell them.
- C. Children typically develop spelling skills before decoding skills.
- D. The two skills, spelling and decoding, are only related for the most basic decodable words.

Correct answer: A. Spelling and decoding skills typically develop together because a student's ability to use spelling rules translates into a correct interpretation of that rule when decoding new words.

Question 5

A first-grade teacher designed a word wheel where only the beginning letter of the word changes when students spin the wheel. This activity best assesses which of the following?

- A. contextual analysis
- B. initial blends
- C. directionality
- D. suffixes

Correct answer: B. The activity provides a way for students to use a variety of initial blends to make new words with the same ending.

Domain 3:

Fluency

Overview

Domain 3 has about eight multiple-choice items and one focused educational problem and instructional task (75-to-125-word response).

This domain has 2 competencies:

- The Role of Fluency
- Fluency Development

So, let's start with The Role of Fluency.

The Role of Fluency

This section tests your understanding of the factors that positively and negatively affect students' development of fluency in all stages of reading development.

Here are some concepts that you may see on the test.

Components of Fluency

There are four components of fluency: accuracy, rate, prosody, and automaticity. Let's talk about each.

- Accuracy- Accuracy is the percentage of words read aloud correctly. Accuracy percentage equals the number of words read correctly divided by the total number of words in the passage.
- Rate- Rate is the speed at which a passage is read. Readers should read words fast enough so that comprehension can be constructed. Rate is expressed as words per minute. The formula for rate (or words per minute) equals the number of words read correctly times 60 (seconds) divided by the time the reader took to read the passage in seconds.
- Prosody- Prosody is the expression used to describe a reader's pitch, stress, and timing. Prosody is used to convey meaning. Effective readers read in meaningful phrases or chunks. Their use of intonation is their verbal demonstration of punctuation marks.

- Automaticity- Automaticity is when readers are able to spontaneously identify words without having to decode them. This is the goal of decoding. Automaticity gives readers the ability to access prior knowledge and build meaning for comprehension. If a reader takes too long to decode text, meaning can be lost.

Fluency Development

This section tests your knowledge of factors that affect a students' decoding of passages.

Here are some concepts that you may see on the test.

Effective Fluency Instruction

Guided, repeated oral readings at a reader's instructional level allow students to practice fluency. Most important is the teacher's systematic and explicit guidance and feedback.

Phrase-Cued Reading

Phrase-cued reading is an effective intervention strategy for improving students' phrasing abilities and prosody. Teachers create phrase-cued text passages. A phrase-cued text is a written passage that is divided according to natural pauses that occur in and between sentences.

To create a phrase-cued passage, the teacher will use a 100-to-250-word passage on the reader's instructional or independent reading level. The teacher marks the sentence boundaries of the passage with double slashes (//). The teacher places single slashes (/) within the sentence where naturally occurring phrases based on meaning occur.

And that's some basic info about Domain 3: Fluency.

Now, let's look at a few practice questions in each area to see how these concepts might actually appear on the real test.

Domain 3 Practice Questions

Question 1

Which type of cueing system is being activated in the scenario below?

A teacher creates a series of word lists like the example below, with the topic word at the top and descriptors below. Students are asked to read through the lists, draw a line through any terms that don't belong, and add any words they think are missing.

Tree

Leaves	Maple
Shrub	Oak
Branch	Cedar
Rods	Evergreen
Bank	Dandelion

- A. syntactic
- B. graphophonic
- C. pragmatic
- D. semantic

Correct answer: D. This activity is asking students to make connections between words they know and create a “map” of semantic closeness. Students who have a strong semantic knowledge of like terms are able to define new words when they are encountered in a reading.

Use the following example to answer questions 2 - 3

At the beginning of the school year, a second-grade teacher administers a fluency assessment to each child in the class. The student reads an unfamiliar passage out loud while the teacher records the student's performance on another copy of the same passage.

Let's Ride a Bike

It's so much fun to ride a bike! You can get lots of exercise too. At first, you will use a bike with training wheels. Then, you will use a two-wheel bike.

Before you start biking, you need equipment to protect your head, knees, and elbows. You should wear a helmet, knee pads, and elbow pads.

Practice on a flat surface when you begin learning. Make sure you stay away from traffic and let grownups help you. Soon, you will be riding a bike all around your town!

Key: ○ omission | short pause ← repetition @ self-correction

^ insertion || long pause cat/dog substitution

Question 2

After examining the student's performance on this fluency assessment, the teacher should plan additional instruction around which of the following areas.

- A. decoding one- and two-syllable words
- B. repeated practice with academic vocabulary
- C. choral reading with an emphasis on prosody
- D. decreasing the student's reading rate

Correct answer: A. The student's most common errors are decoding one and two-syllable words, such as "bike," "wheels," "knee," and "elbows." In order to improve the student's basic decoding skills, the teacher should reteach gaps in the student's phonics instruction and teach students how to break two-syllable words into smaller chunks.

Question 3

The student pauses frequently while reading the text. Evidence from the assessment best reinforces which of the following explanations of this reading error?

- A. The student inconsistently applies phonics rules.
- B. The student frequently switches verb tenses.
- C. The student struggles to decode multisyllabic words.
- D. The student is unfamiliar with the author’s syntax.

Correct answer: C. The student pauses mostly when reading multisyllabic words, such as “exercise” and “biking.” Therefore, the student would benefit from additional instruction in this area.

Question 4

After observing that a student is not a fluent reader, the teacher should first:

- A. formally assess the student’s reading fluency to identify possible causes.
- B. make arrangements for small-group intervention.
- C. request formal testing from the school diagnostician.
- D. increase the amount of reading homework that the student is assigned each night.

Correct answer: A. This would be the best first step toward planning appropriate intervention for the student.

Question 5

Mr. Blaschke wants to develop his students’ fluency while reading. Which activity would best help him achieve this goal?

- A. Reviewing phonics and frequent morpheme pronunciations.
- B. Create a word wall to introduce students to new terms they may encounter in their reading.
- C. Have students read unknown excerpts in front of the class.
- D. Read short excerpts of poetry, demonstrating how to pause and add proper inflection.

Correct answer: D. By modeling how to pause and inflect while reading, Mr. Blaschke can demonstrate good fluency to his students through short reading passages.

Domain 4:

Vocabulary, Academic Language, and Background Knowledge

Overview

Domain 4 has about 15 multiple-choice items and one focused educational problem and instructional task (75-to-125-word response).

This domain has two competencies:

- The Role of Vocabulary, Academic Language, and Background Knowledge
- Development of Vocabulary, Academic Language, and Background Knowledge

So, let's start with The Role of Vocabulary, Academic Language, and Background Knowledge.

The Role of Vocabulary, Academic Language, and Background Knowledge

This section tests your knowledge of the factors that affect students' development of vocabulary, academic language, and background knowledge in reading growth.

Here are some concepts that you may see on the test.

The Matthew Effect

The Matthew effect can be expressed by the idea that “the rich get richer and the poor get poorer,” but it applies to many areas of human attainment, including education. Applied to reading, the Matthew effect theorizes that readers who have a slow start learning to read do not progress as quickly as readers who have a strong foundation. As time passes, this gap only widens. This is a strong argument for early intervention and developing pre-reading skills during the preschool years.

Word Consciousness

Word consciousness is the expression used to describe the reader's way of prioritizing or finding new words and figuring out what they mean. Readers look for multiple meanings and add the new words to their linguistic repertoire.

Development of Vocabulary, Academic Language, and Background Knowledge

This section tests your knowledge of the components of research-based instruction for vocabulary development.

Here are some concepts that you may see on the test.

Semantic and Morphological Maps

Semantic maps, sometimes called graphic organizers, are webs of words that visually display the meaning-based connections between a word or phrase and a set of related words or concepts.

Morphological maps are visual displays of the meaning-based connections of morphemes (units of meaning). These maps are a graphic representation of a morpheme linked to its meaning.

Synonyms and Antonyms

A synonym is a word or phrase that means exactly or nearly the same as another word or phrase.

- old and ancient
- finish and complete
- rich and wealthy

An antonym is a word or phrase that means the opposite of another word or phrase.

- forget and remember
- start and end
- rich and poor

And that's some basic info about Domain 4: Vocabulary, Academic Language, and Background Knowledge.

Now, let's look at a few practice questions in each area to see how these concepts might actually appear on the real test.

Domain 4 Practice Questions

Question 1

How does speaking vocabulary differ from reading vocabulary?

- A. Vocabulary does not vary much between speaking, reading, and writing.
- B. Students are exposed to more varied and higher-level vocabulary while reading.
- C. The vocabulary a student generally uses when they speak is equivalent to what they will use when they write, but less than what they will experience when they read.
- D. New vocabulary is generally only developed through conversation.

Correct answer: B. People encounter a wider variety of words and more advanced vocabulary when they read and use a larger scope of words when they write.

Question 2

A sixth-grade teacher reads a book to her students with the vocabulary word “amino acid.” Which tier does this vocabulary word fit into?

- A. tier one
- B. tier two
- C. tier three
- D. tier four

Correct answer: C. Tier three vocabulary words are low-frequency, context-specific vocabulary words that are specific to domains, such as science, technology, weather, etc. Examples would be: stratosphere, amino acid, microprocessor, etc.

Question 3

One example of the Matthew effect as seen in education is the tendency for:

- A. the gap between strong and struggling young readers to increase as time passes.
- B. the gap between strong and struggling young readers to decrease as time passes.
- C. the gap between strong and struggling young readers to remain constant as time passes.
- D. the tendency for intervention to be equally effective regardless of the age of the student.

Correct answer: A. The Matthew effect describes how an initial advantage in achievement can increase the probability of greater success, while an initial deficit can have the opposite effect. In an educational context, this suggests that students who begin their education showing strength in reading are often able to build exponentially on that strength, while students who struggle early on continue to struggle, widening the gap between low and high achievers.

Question 4

When choosing vocabulary words for his fifth-grade students, a teacher has been purposefully selecting academic and high-frequency words. He already has various strategies and routine activities in place to facilitate the use of and interaction with high-frequency words. He is now focused on expanding his students' experiences with the academic vocabulary specifically. Which of the following would best support this goal?

- A. requiring students to use the new academic vocabulary outside of school a certain number of times
- B. deliberately using the new academic vocabulary terms in questions and activities outside of reading instruction and/or asking teachers of other subjects to do so
- C. requiring the students to use the new academic vocabulary in their journal writing
- D. completing word searches that include the new academic vocabulary

Correct answer: B. Reinforcing these terms across different content areas will expose them to the words in a new setting and increase the likelihood that they remember the words, their meaning, and how to use them in a sentence.

Question 5

A seventh-grade teacher is reading Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with her students. The class is discussing the following monologue by Puck, a fairy character.

PUCK:

I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,

Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier;

Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,

A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire,

And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,

Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.

The teacher plans several learning activities for students on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In one activity, students learn the histories behind unfamiliar words within the play, such as "brier." In another activity, students are asked to make up several new words that they think could have been used during Shakespeare's time and present them to the class as part of a dramatic or comedic monologue. These activities further students' reading abilities by:

- A. helping students distinguish between whimsical and serious tones in writing.
- B. encouraging students to use context clues to understand unfamiliar words.
- C. showing students that researching and creating new words can be enjoyable.
- D. demonstrating to students the differences between narrative stories and dramatic texts.

Correct answer: C. These activities show students that learning about a word's etymology, or history, can be enjoyable. Having students make up new words (based on their research) and present them to the class in a monologue is a unique way for them to engage with the content.

Domain 5:

Comprehension

Overview

Domain 5 has about 13 multiple-choice items and one focused educational problem and instructional task (150-to-300-word response).

This domain has four competencies:

- Literal, Inferential, and Evaluative Comprehension
- Comprehension Instruction
- Comprehension of Narrative/Literary Texts
- Comprehension of Expository/Informational Texts and Study/Research Skills

So, let's start with Literal, Inferential, and Evaluative Comprehension.

Literal, Inferential, and Evaluative Comprehension

This section tests your knowledge of factors that affect comprehension, such as word analysis, fluency, vocabulary, academic knowledge, and background knowledge.

Here are some concepts that you may see on the test.

Inferential Reading Comprehension

Inferential reading comprehension is the ability of the reader to process and understand the underlying meaning of the text. For example, let's say a piece of text states that a character has a smile on his face. The reader can infer that the character is happy. If the text states that it is snowing, the reader can infer that it may be winter. Inferential comprehension requires readers to combine ideas, draw conclusions, interpret and evaluate information, and identify the tone and voice of a passage.

Evaluative Reading Comprehension

Evaluative reading comprehension is the ability of the reader to comprehend at a higher and more complex level of understanding. Evaluative reading comprehension involves critical analysis of the text. The reader must be critical, form opinions, and identify the author's point of view, attitudes, messages, and themes. This also includes the reader being able to identify and consider motives of characters.

Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is making sense of spoken language. It includes recognizing speech sounds, understanding the meaning of individual words, and understanding the syntax of sentences in which the words are spoken. The ability to comprehend what is heard enhances the developing reader's ability to comprehend what is read. During listening comprehension activities or learning opportunities, readers do not have to focus on decoding. They can focus on comprehension skills.

Comprehension Instruction

This section tests your knowledge of research-based, explicit instructional techniques in comprehension.

Here are some concepts that you may see on the test.

Visualizing

Readers who comprehend construct mental images as they read. The reader uses prior knowledge and background experiences to connect to the text with a personal picture. Effective reading instruction involves explicit instructional strategies that guide students to visualize. These activities teach students how to create their own mental pictures as they read.

Text-to-World Connection

Readers who make personal connections between the text and their own life experiences comprehend at higher levels of thinking. An example would be when a reader says "This story reminds me of the time my family went on a vacation to Washington, D.C."

Comprehension of Narrative/Literary Texts

This section tests your understanding of how to facilitate developing readers' comprehension and analysis of narrative/literary text and their development of literary response skills.

Here are some concepts that you may see on the test.

Story Elements

Story elements are the characteristics that make a story a story. The five basic story elements are:

- characters
- setting
- plot
- conflict
- resolution

Understanding how story elements work allows the reader to comprehend the logical sequence of a story. This understanding enables the reader to monitor his/her comprehension. Story elements should be explicitly taught through both listening and reading comprehension activities. The teaching of story elements begins with pre-readers.

Literature Circles

Literature circles are small groups of readers put together to have deep discussions of a specific piece of literature. The discussion is guided by the students' responses to what they have read. The topic of literature circle discussions may revolve around the events and characters in the story, the author's craft, or personal connections the readers made with the story. By participating in literature circles, readers develop the ability to discuss, define, and critically explore a text.

Literary Response Journals

A literary response journal is a place for readers to respond to a piece of literature. The reader writes thoughts and reflections about the text. The reader states opinions about the story elements, theme, or moral of the story, including text evidence.

Comprehension of Expository/Informational Texts and Study/Research Skills

This section tests your understanding of how to promote students' comprehension and development of study and research skills.

Here are some concepts that you may see on the test.

Common Expository/Informational Text Structures

Expository/informational text is written in various structures or arrangements. Students who understand how these structures work are better able to comprehend the text. Teachers must explicitly show students how to recognize, analyze, and comprehend these various structures. Here are some examples of expository/informational text structures:

Chronological - Chronological structure is text arranged in a sequence or time order. Keywords that occur in chronological texts are:

- first, second, third
- in the beginning
- before, previously
- not long after
- finally

Cause and effect - Cause and effect text is arranged in relationships of why something happens and its result. Keywords that occur in cause and effect texts are:

- because
- so
- consequently
- therefore
- since

Problem and solution - In a problem and solution text, authors organize their ideas by presenting a problem that needs to be solved. Then, the solution is explained. Keywords that occur in problem and solution texts are:

- problem
- dilemma
- if, then
- answer
- solved
- reason why

Text Features

Text features like the table of contents, index, glossary, graphic features, titles, and subtitles are the basic characteristics of expository/informational text. Authors of expository texts use these structures to arrange and connect ideas. Students who understand and are able to use these text features are able to comprehend the text. Teachers must explicitly teach how to use text features as a guide to comprehending the text.

Evaluating Internal Consistency of a Text

The internal consistency of an expository/informational text refers to how well the author conveys the intended message. It is the extent to which the ideas are supported with explanations, examples, and/or reasons. Teaching students to look for internal consistency of expository/informational texts enables them to comprehend better and more critically.

And that's some basic info about Domain 5: Comprehension.

Now, let's look at a few practice questions in each area to see how these concepts might actually appear on the real test.

Domain 5 Practice Questions

Use the following example of a project to answer questions 1 - 2

A fifth-grade class has been studying the differences between reptiles and amphibians. The teacher has designed this multimedia project as part of a multi-chapter review at the end of the unit.

Step 1: The teacher conducts a whole-class discussion comparing and contrasting reptiles and amphibians. As students share facts, the teacher fills out a Venn diagram on the board summarizing their discussion.

Step 2: Students break into cooperative learning groups made up of four students. The groups are heterogenous, containing students at different learning levels.

Step 3: Students work together to make a multimedia slide presentation about four reptiles and four amphibians. Each student in the group has two slides to complete, one on each type of animal. Students write a two-sentence description about the animal on each slide.

Step 4: The students edit and revise the sentences as needed and arrange the slides in the most logical way to present the information to the class.

After all groups have presented, the teacher conducts a class-wide review of the information covered throughout the unit.

Question 1

After reviewing the project in its current form, the teacher makes the decision to add another step to the instructional plan. For step 5, the students will take the facts and vocabulary they learned from reading the textbook chapter and complete an outline for a compare-and-contrast essay. This additional step will help develop students' reading skills by:

- A. teaching them how to articulate a text's main ideas and corresponding supporting details.
- B. teaching them how to summarize the beginning, middle, and end of the article.
- C. teaching them how to monitor their own comprehension when reading nonfiction texts.
- D. teaching them how to support an argument with facts and opinions from the text.

Correct answer: A. Creating an outline for a compare-and-contrast essay will require students to write down the text's main ideas and supporting details. This will help advance their reading skills.

Question 2

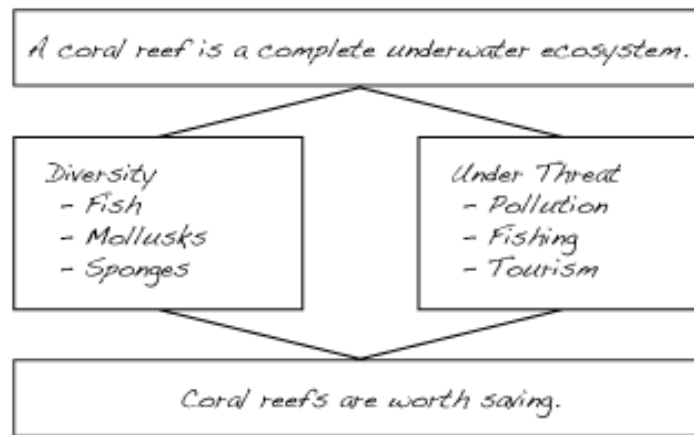
This multimedia project is most likely to improve students' reading skills by helping them:

- A. utilize new technology to communicate their views with peers.
- B. use new vocabulary they have learned in multiple ways.
- C. speak and write in complete sentences when communicating.
- D. alternate between casual and academic English vocabulary.

Correct answer: B. This project requires students to use new vocabulary they have learned from reading the article in multiple ways, including during an oral discussion and while making multimedia slides.

Use the following example to answer question 3 - 4

A sixth-grade class has recently read a textbook chapter on coral reefs. The teacher breaks the students into several small groups and has them make a list of everything they have learned. The teacher then holds a class discussion in which each group shares the items they listed. As students share, the teacher adds their ideas to the middle two squares of the organizer. Lastly, the teacher guides students through writing the sentences in the first and last box. The class's completed graphic organizer is below.



Question 3

Using this type of graphic organizer during a classroom activity will help students improve their comprehension of informational texts by:

- A. providing students with a system to practice new vocabulary words in context.
- B. encouraging students to determine what they don't know about a topic early in the unit.
- C. teaching students a strategy for determining the main idea and details in an efficient manner.
- D. helping students use signal words to determine the text structure the author is using.

Correct answer: C. This graphic organizer will help students determine the main idea and details of the text. The first box contains the main idea and the middle boxes contain the supporting details. The final box contains a concluding sentence, which is a restatement of the main idea.

Question 4

The teacher distributes an article to students and includes a blank copy of the same graphic organizer. Utilizing this organizer to record main points within the article as they read will help students:

- A. evaluate the validity of the text's argument.
- B. monitor their own comprehension of the text.
- C. retain new vocabulary words they have learned.
- D. compare and contrast multiple texts on the same topic.

Correct answer: B. Using this type of graphic organizer will help students comprehend the main points of the text while reading. Graphic organizers are a key tool teachers can use to encourage students to monitor their own comprehension of a text as they read.

Question 5

Which of the following characteristics describes a memoir?

- A. a book in which the author tells his or her own life story
- B. a book in which the author tells the story of another person
- C. a book in which one author writes several short stories
- D. a book in which the author instructs the reader on a topic

Correct answer: A. A book in which a person tells his or her own story is a memoir, making this the correct answer choice.

Case Study

Overview

Domains 2-5 each contain one short answer response, in addition to the multiple-choice questions.

For the longer case study, you will be given:

- substantial background information on a student
- samples of materials illustrating the student's reading performance

You will be asked to:

- assess the student's reading performance
- describe appropriate instructional strategies
- explain why these strategies would be effective

It is critical that you consider all five domains of the RICA Content Specifications when formulating your review of the student and remediation. You will be asked to review the student's data to find three reading issues. These issues may be weaknesses, strengths, or a combination of both. When assessing the reader's issues, be sure to include evidence you found in the student's data.

You will also be asked to describe two strategies to use to address your student's reading issues. For each strategy, you will explain how each one will help address your student's reading issues. One strategy should address two or more issues. When explaining how a strategy would be beneficial for the present time, also explain how the reader can apply the strategy in the future.

Because writing this essay is such a big, complex task, you should first chart or map out your ideas: three issues with supporting data, two strategies, an explanation of how each strategy is beneficial now and in the future, and inclusion of all five RICA domains.

Thank you for choosing this ebook by 240 Tutoring!

We believe your time is valuable and know that you don't have extra time to waste on study resources that fail to help you meet your goal - passing your exam and moving forward in your teaching career.

This ebook provides a condensed overview of key information on your exam. If you think a high-level review is all you need, then you've got it!

But, if you need more comprehensive test preparation to feel confident before taking a potentially career-altering test, allow us to introduce 240 Tutoring's online study guides.

Our study guides are test-aligned, updated regularly, and designed to help you learn what you need to know so you can pass your exam.

With videos, study content, quizzes, flashcards and practice exams, you'll be able to prep for your test whichever way you learn best. And, the online format means you can study whenever it's convenient for you.

Best of all, each one of the 250+ study guides we offer is backed by a money-back guarantee. If you pass the practice test but fail your exam, we'll refund your study guide cost for up to two months.

240 Tutoring - where teachers go to study!

