FTCE Reading K-12 Test Tips & Prepping Smart

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Test Design:

- Based on 9 Competencies and 44 Skills

- Computer-Based Test with 120 Multiple Choice Questions

- Time Given to Complete the Test: 2 hours, 30 minutes

- Passing Score: Scaled Score of 200

Types of Questions:

- Scenario - you interpret a scenario and decide what to do

- Text Analysis - you identify different elements of language

- Direct Question - (leading question) you are led to the answer

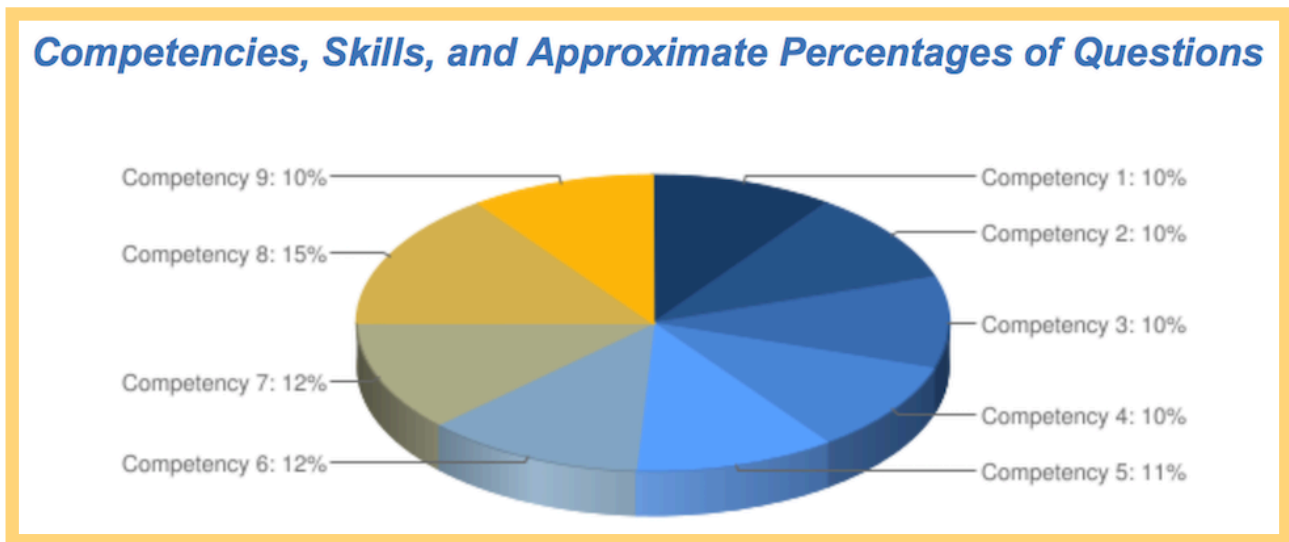- Sentence Completion - you define a term

Table of Question Formats

Type of Question	
Scenario Examine a classroom situation or a student composition. Then select the response option that best answers a question, recommends a course of action, or gives the appropriate evaluation or teacher comment.	
Text Analysis Study a text and identify a literary feature, such as a figure of speech, style, form, or function, by choosing the best response option.	
Direct question Choose the response option that best answers the question.	
Sentence Completion Select the response option that best completes the sentence.	

Overview of Competencies and Skills:

1. Knowledge of research and theories of reading processes

2. Knowledge of text types and structures

3. Knowledge of reading assessment and evaluation

4. Knowledge of learning environments and procedures that support reading

5. Knowledge of oral and written language acquisition and beginning reading

6. Knowledge of phonics and word recognition

7. Knowledge of vocabulary acquisition and use

8. Knowledge of reading fluency and reading comprehension

9. Knowledge of reading program development, implementation, and coordination

Percentages of Competencies on the Test:

Competencies, Skills, and Approximate Percentages of Questions

Competency 9: 10%
Competency 8: 15%
Competency 7: 12%
Competency 6: 12%

Competency 1: 10%
Competency 2: 10%
Competency 3: 10%
Competency 4: 10%
Competency 5: 11%

General Overview of the 9 Competencies and 44 Skills:

Competency 1: Knowledge of Research and Theories of Reading Process

For this competency, eight foundational theorists are given, as well as their theories. Then we take a look at what those theories would look like within classroom instruction.

- 1.1 Identify characteristics and sources of valid research.
- 1.2 Identify foundational theorists and differentiate among theories of reading processes and development.
- 1.3 Relate instructional applications to theories of reading processes and development.

Competency 2: Knowledge of Text Types and Structures

This competency is about text features and structures of both literary (fiction) and informational (nonfiction) texts. You need to know about genres and how to evaluate and select text at the appropriate reading level, text complexity and interests of diverse learners.

- 2.1 Identify text structures and text features of literary and informational texts.
- 2.2 Differentiate among the characteristics, features, and elements of various literary and informational genres and formats of texts for reading and writing.
- 2.3 Evaluate and select appropriate texts to reflect and support the backgrounds of diverse learners while matching texts to student interest.
- 2.4 Determine criteria for evaluating and selecting both print and nonprint texts for instructional use.
- 2.5 Evaluate and select texts at appropriate reading levels and text complexity for diverse learners.

Competency 3: Knowledge of Reading Assessment and Evaluation

The types of assessments that are conducted daily, weekly, monthly in the classroom are the focus of this competency. The FLDOE wants to make sure that you know how to conduct both informal and formal assessments, and how you will monitor students' progress to inform and drive your instruction.

- 3.1 Differentiate among characteristics of norm-referenced, criterion-referenced, and performance-based assessments used for screening, diagnosis, progress monitoring, and outcomes.

- 3.2 Evaluate and select appropriate oral and written assessment instruments and practices using continuous text for monitoring individual student progress.

- 3.3 Analyze and interpret data from multiple informal and formal reading and writing assessments to guide whole-group instruction.

- 3.4 Analyze and interpret student data from multiple informal and formal reading and writing assessments to differentiate instruction and develop individual student goals for diverse learners.

- 3.5 Identify characteristics of students at varying reading levels.

Competency 4: Knowledge of Learning Environments and Procedures that Support Reading

In the classroom, how will you set up the learning environment to support reading? This competency focuses on grouping practices and procedures to integrate and teach reading, writing, speaking and listening in the classroom. The way the classroom procedures are *organized* and the way they are *managed* makes a big difference in how much reading progress is made. How students are grouped (dynamically), and when to initiate preventative, strategic and intensive intervention is important.

- 4.1 Apply appropriate grouping practices for specific instructional purposes in reading.

- 4.2 Determine appropriate procedures and delivery methods to integrate speaking and listening, reading and writing, and viewing for diverse learners across content areas.

- 4.3 Evaluate and select techniques for encouraging motivation and promoting positive attitudes of diverse learners toward academic and personal reading.

- 4.4 Apply appropriate instructional methods to integrate technology, support student-centered learning, and establish an information-rich environment.

- 4.5 Determine organizational and classroom management practices for multiple reading programs to support diverse learners.

- 4.6 Evaluate and select methods of prevention and intervention for students who have not mastered grade level language arts standards.

Competency 5: Knowledge of Oral and Written Language Acquisition and Beginning Reading

Being able to identify the concepts for oral and written language acquisition and beginning reading are part of phonological awareness, and something that frankly, we as adults tend to forget, because it was so long ago that we learned to read. Most of this competency is review and memorization of the steps in this process.

- 5.1 Identify the concepts related to oral and written language acquisition.
- 5.2 Identify the concepts related to beginning reading.
- 5.3 Apply instructional methods for developing oral language, phonological awareness, concepts of print, alphabet knowledge, and written language development.

Competency 6: Knowledge of Phonics and Word Recognition

This is where most of the specific reading questions come from on this test - Competencies 6, 7, and 8. The FLDOE wants to make sure that you understand the beginning to the end of the reading process, as well as the five elements of reading that are essential to any reading block of instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. This competency, 6, deals with phonics and word recognition. Even though it has fewer skills listed, there is a depth of information you need to know for these skills.

- 6.1 Identify the concepts related to word recognition development.
- 6.2 Apply instructional methods for developing phonemic awareness and phonics knowledge for diverse learners.
- 6.3 Apply instructional methods for developing word analysis skills for decoding and encoding monosyllabic and multisyllabic words for diverse learners.
- 6.4 Apply instructional methods for promoting the recognition of high frequency words, sight words, and irregularly spelled words for diverse learners.

Competency 7: Knowledge of Vocabulary and Acquisition

It is important when answering questions in this competency that you always choose the answer that refers to learning vocabulary in context. Vocabulary in isolation, that is, vocabulary words that are not related to current lessons in reading, math, science and social studies just simply does not work in learning new words. Students do not retain vocabulary in isolation, so valuable time is wasted. The FLDOE wants to make sure that you know how to help students increase their vocabulary by teaching it within the context of current lessons, but also show students how to figure out words on their own, given specific strategies. Students also need to know how to use the three tiers of vocabulary reflected in conversation, academic and domain words.

- 7.1 Identify the concepts of vocabulary acquisition and use.
- 7.2 Evaluate and select instructional methods for vocabulary acquisition and use in speaking and listening, reading and writing for diverse learners.
- 7.3 Apply appropriate instructional methods for developing the use of independent word learning strategies for diverse learners.
- 7.4 Apply instructional methods for developing and using conversational, general academic, and domain specific words and phrases for diverse learners.

Competency 8: Knowledge of Reading Fluency and Reading Comprehension

Fluency and comprehension are the hallmarks of skilled readers. Once students have learned how to sound out words, collect a vocabulary of words, and figure out words, they then have more brain space to comprehend what they are reading. And they can become automatic in reading passages fluently while being able to think critically. One of the skills in this competency is metacognition. Sometimes, professional tests will have questions on skills that are not familiar. The term, metacognition may not be familiar, but you are already conducting the practices of metacognition; they just have not been labelled as such.

- 8.1 Identify the components of reading fluency that support comprehension.
- 8.2 Apply appropriate instructional methods for developing fluent reading with purpose and understanding for diverse learners.
- 8.3 Evaluate and select instructional methods for teaching skills and developing strategies for comprehension and analysis of informational texts.
- 8.4 Evaluate and select instructional methods for teaching skills and developing strategies for comprehension and analysis of literary texts.
- 8.5 Apply instructional methods for developing metacognition and critical thinking for diverse learners.
- 8.6 Apply instructional methods for engaging students in evidence-based collaborative discussions about literary and informational print and non-print texts.
- 8.7 Apply instructional methods to develop study skills for comprehension of literary and informational texts for diverse learners.

Competency 9: Knowledge of Reading Program Development, Implementation and Coordination

Being able to read data to evaluate reading instruction outcomes and being able to disseminate that information so that stakeholders can understand, are important skills for this competency. Helping and inviting caregivers to become more involved in reading education follows. The ability to critically evaluate reading instruction to modify and improve instruction and outcomes, which includes clarifying roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals is the final skill.

- 9.1 Evaluate and select approaches for involving stakeholders in reading initiatives for diverse learners.
- 9.2 Evaluate and select approaches to increase caregiver involvement in reading education.
- 9.3 Interpret reading policies, program information, and assessment data for the purpose of dissemination among stakeholders.
- 9.4 Select and evaluate instructional materials for comprehensive reading programs and reading intervention programs for diverse learners.
- 9.5 Identify criteria to determine the effectiveness of reading programs.
- 9.6 Interpret school data and program evaluation results to modify and improve curriculum content and instruction through professional learning.
- 9.7 Determine effective methods for coaching and supporting paraprofessionals, tutors, ad volunteers to assist in reading instruction for diverse learners.

Nuts and Bolts of a Study Plan

- Proven Test Taking Strategies

- General Good and Bad Key Words

- How Long Should I Study? Prepping Smart

Test-Taking Strategies on the Format of the Test:

- With 2hrs and 30 minutes to answer 120 questions, you have 90 seconds, or 1 minute and a half for each question.
- Don't worry about this. With proper studying, you will answer some questions within 15 seconds; most will probably take 30 seconds, and some will take up to 1 minute or more. (I completed the test in just under an hour).
- For questions that you have no idea how to answer, jot down the question number on your whiteboard and move on to the next question to keep your momentum. Try not to get flustered.
- If you are truly stumped by a question, try to eliminate as many options as you can and then take your best guess.

Test Taking Strategies: Knowing About Field Questions

Do you know that not all of the questions count toward the test score? Embedded in the test are field test questions that are being "tried out" by the publisher to see if they work, and whether or not to use them on future versions of the test. These questions are less refined, and could confuse or frustrate you. If you come upon a question that really flusters you, write down the question number and move on to questions that you can answer more easily.

- The good news is that these questions don't count.
- The bad news is that you don't know which ones are the Field Test questions, and if you get flustered by one of these less refined questions, it could psyche you out and impact your focus and concentration for the rest of the test.
- Don't let this happen! Remember to take note of possible Field Test questions.

Test Taking Strategies for Answering Questions:

There are strategies for answering questions. Reading the question all the way through can be tiring, so it is important to scan the question first and take note of the important terms, and then scan the answer choices. If the question is lengthy, go to the answer choices first to look for terms, especially if there are one-word terms for the answers, and then go to the question for the definition. Sometimes, you will see terms in the answer choices that are not aligned with the competencies, so take note of the terms that are aligned with the competencies, and go to the question to find what matches those terms.

• Look at only the terms in the question.
• Write down terms aligned with the Competencies and Key Words.
• Go to the answers first and eliminate the answers that you know are not good.
• Look for the answer that has the terms.
• If the question has no terms, look at the answer terms and think about the term definitions, then go to the question to find the definition.

General Good and Bad Key Words:

Good Key Words:

These are the words that are considered to be good key words for this test. As you scan over this list, you will see authentic words such as literature circles and socratic seminar, and choral reading, but not silent reading. Why? Silent reading has a place in reading instruction. However, this test is about teaching diverse learners, and silent reading does not help struggling readers to progress. It also doesn't help you to know whether or not they are progressing. Whereas, choral reading tends to help struggling readers. So, keep that in mind.

• Positive - always want the answer to be positive for students, not punitive
• Intrinsic - intrinsic (motivational) rewards for students, not extrinsic like candy
• Data Driven - observations, test scores, grouping
• Differentiated - diverse learners' needs
• Authentic - literature circles, socratic seminar; choral reading - NO silent reading
• Relevant - vocabulary in context, real world applications

Bad Key Words:

These are the words that are considered to the bad key words for this test. They are straightforward, except for the silent reading, round robin reading and popcorn reading. Again, these are considered negative practices where struggling readers are concerned because it puts them on the spot, and can humiliate them. As mentioned above, choral reading takes away that frustration for struggling readers because it helps all students to hear and understand how to read appropriately and fluently.

- Punitive - negative and does not motivate students
- Extra Homework - also negative and does not help
- Silent Reading - does not help struggling students
- Round Robin/Popcorn Reading - flusters struggling students
- Extrinsic Rewards - candy or pizza rewards are frowned upon
- Vocabulary in Isolation - copying definitions or vocabulary in isolation is never a good answer

How Long Should I Study? Prepping Smart

The best way to prep smart is to set up a study plan and study the specific skills needed to pass this test; so it is what you study, not how long you study. That means taking a targeted approach to the content. The next best thing to do is to use the strategies mentioned above to unlock the mindset of the test writer. Finally, give yourself enough time for intensive and quality study time before the test date.

- One of the reasons teachers fail is because they aren't prepping smart.
- It's not a regular test; it's a job performance competition: You v. The FLDOE.
- You must use test taking techniques and strategies, and unlock the mindset of the test writer.
- Prepping Smart is also what you study, not how long you study.Set up your study plan with a tactical and targeted approach to the content.
- This means studying the 9 competencies and 44 skills, not broad information.
- Take 4-6 solid weeks to study the specific information in these modules.