



## **Praxis 5205: Teaching Reading Elementary**

### **Test Design, Tips, & Scaled Score**

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## Introduction

In this introduction, we will be looking at the test design, types of questions, the test blueprint, the skills needed to pass, and some test strategies to consider. Understanding this makes it easier to know exactly what and how to study in preparation for this test. We will also figure out how to find your passing scaled score from the raw score you get from a practice test.

## Test Design

Format: *Selected Response and Constructed Response*

Number of Questions: *90 Selected Response; 3 Constructed Response*

Time Given: *150 minutes*

Passing Scaled Score: *156-162; set by individual state education departments*

## How Do I Find My State's Passing Scaled Score on the Praxis Exams?

You can google this question word for word and the first link that comes up is the link to ETS and the Praxis state search site for passing scores. It will take you to the following link. Type in your state and click the search button.

**<https://www.ets.org/praxis/site/epp/state-requirements/score-requirements.html>**

## Scaled Score: What is it?

Scaled scoring means they take the raw scores of several different versions of the same test, compare them, and convert them to a *scaled score*. This is done so that the different raw numbers have the same meaning and fairness in passing the test. The *raw score* is the actual number of items that a test taker answered correctly on a test, whereas the *scaled score* takes into account the difficulty level of the questions, because some versions of the test may be more difficult than other versions. Think of this scaled score as a 'common scale' across the different versions of tests taken by different groups of individuals, and it is done this way to be fair to every test taker.

On the next page, I'm going to tell you how to figure out your scaled score on practice tests.

## Calculating Your Scaled Score for Both Multiple Choice and Constructed Response:

Each selected response, or multiple choice question is worth one raw point, with the exception of the few selected response questions that have more than one answer choice. In case the answer has two correct choices, the question is worth two raw points. Multiple choice questions make up 75% of the test.

The constructed response questions require you to write a short written answer. These questions are scored by two trained educators to keep the scoring fair. The constructed response questions are worth 1-4 points each, and are 25% of the overall score.

**Step 1: Multiple choice raw score:** Count the number of questions you answered *correctly*. Divide by the total number of questions, which is 90. This gives you your raw score as a percentage.

Divide: 70 correct questions, divided by 90, is  $70/90 = 0.777$  or 78% raw score.

**Step 2:** This isn't your overall score yet, because the multiple choice questions make up only 75% of the test. We still have to take into account the constructed response questions that make up the other 25% of the test. Since the multiple choice questions make up only 75% of the test, we must multiply the 78% by 75%:

Multiply:  $0.78 \times 0.75 = 0.585$  or 59% - **this is the first part of your score**

**Step 3:** The score for constructed response questions is 1-4 points. So let's use 3 as a calculation for your constructed response score, so  $3/4 = 75\%$ . Since this makes up the other 25% of the test, we must multiply 75% by 25%:

Multiply:  $0.75 \times 0.25 = 0.187$  or 19% - **this is the second part of your score**

**Step 4:** Now we must add the raw score from the multiple choice questions, first 75% of the test, and the raw score from the constructed response, the second part, 25% of the test, to get the overall score, **and then add 100 to get the scaled score:**

Add:  $59\% + 19\% = 78\%$ . Drop the % and add  $100 + 78 = 178$  - **this is your Scaled Score**

## Types of Questions

There are four different types of questions that you will encounter on this test; straightforward multiple choice, challenging multiple choice, graphs and tables, and reading passages. Let's take a look at each type of question, and the best way to make sure we understand what the question is asking, and select the correct answer.

**(1) *Straightforward Multiple Choice:*** In this type of question, each answer choice is one word, resulting from a direct questions asking you to define or identify. For this type of question, you will need to know the definition of the many terms used in reading instruction, or be able to identify a process or scenario. The following is a basic, straightforward multiple choice question.

Sample Question: Which of the following is a flavor made from beans?

- a. Strawberry
- b. Cherry
- c. Vanilla
- d. Mint

The correct answer is (c) Vanilla. Make sure you don't look too deeply into this type of question. This is the type of question you can answer quickly and move on.

**(2) *Challenging Multiple Choice:*** In this type of question, the answer may contain two or more words, resulting from a direct question that is asking for a higher level of definition or identification. For this question, it will be helpful to carefully read the question and circle any terms, especially when there is extra confusing language that doesn't pertain to the answer. For example, you will see in the following challenging multiple choice question that can catch you off guard, how important it is to circle terms.

Sample Question: Entries in outlines are generally arranged according to which of the following relationships of ideas?

- a. Literal and inferential
- b. Concrete and abstract
- c. Linear and recursive
- d. Main and subordinate

The correct answer is (d) main and subordinate. This question can catch you off guard unless you circle the terms. The terms to be circled are *outlines* and *arranged*. So the question is asking how outlines are arranged. It's really a simple question, but the answers make it seem complicated. Three of the answers relate to ideas of writing, but not to outlines. Outlines are arranged by main points and subordinate points. They aren't arranged by relationships in writing.

**(3) Graphs/Tables:** Graphs and tables require interpretation. Make sure to read the question first, then look at the graph or table for the answer. Also, provide only what is asked. You may see many different types of information and/or outcomes by interpreting a graph or table, but make sure to answer only what has been asked.

**(4) Reading Passages:** If you encounter a *long* reading passage, it helps to read the first sentence of each paragraph. This gives you the main idea and the key points of that main idea. You can then look at the questions to see what is being asked, and then go back to the passage to read more thoroughly. This way, you won't get bogged down reading the passage, and you won't get nervous about all the terms in the passage. It also helps you to get through the reading passage and the questions more quickly.

If you encounter a *short* reading passage, then the opposite applies. Read the entire passage first. Then go back and read it again, circling the terms. For example, if you are given a scenario, you will need to dissect it to identify the problem or dilemma in the scenario. When you go back to read it again, circle the terms. Find out exactly what the question is asking, and then write your answer, making sure to use the same terms in your answer.

Using the *same terms* shows you are giving an accurate and complete answer. As you will see later in the constructed response section, we will evaluate the best way to accurately and

completely answer questions about a scenario in a classroom. When the task is to identify two differentiated instructional strategies for the various reading levels in a classroom, the answer specifically states, “one differentiated instructional strategy is the use of...” and goes on to describe the method. Then the answer states, “a second differentiated instructional strategy is...”

## **Test Blueprint**

There are six categories for this test. Each category is a certain percentage of the test, which means there are an approximate number of questions for each category. They are as follows:

**Category I:** 11% of the test; 13 questions. Phonological and Phonemic Awareness Including Emergent Literacy

**Category II:** 15% of the test; 18 questions. Phonics and Decoding

**Category III:** 18% of the test; 21 questions. Vocabulary and Fluency

**Category IV:** 18% of the test; 22 questions. Comprehension of Literary and Informational Text

**Category V:** 13% of the test; 15 questions. Writing

**Category VI:** 25% of the test; 3 questions. Constructed Response

As you can see, the test questions are spread across all five components of literacy. However, the constructed response questions, where you read a scenario and write about a solution or instructional method makes up 25% of the test. That’s a big chunk. But if you do well answering the multiple choice questions, you should have no problem with the constructed responses.

## **Skills Needed to Pass**

This test assesses the knowledge and skills needed to support students in grades K-6.

It is structured about the five components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency.

It assesses reading and writing skill instruction (receptive and productive literacy).

It assesses your knowledge of research based instruction and the science of reading.

Test takers must know how to differentiate instruction for diverse learners.

## Test Strategies

1. **Watch out for the words, not, least, except.** They change the meaning of the question. Our eyes tend to skip over the word, not, which gives the opposite meaning. This is one of the most common ways to get tripped up by a question.
2. **Read the question carefully.** Pick out the terms, circle them, and/or write them down. It is helpful to write down the terms in the question. Then you can go to the answer choices and look for the definition. This can eliminate two answer choices. Sometimes, the definition is in the question, and the term is in the answer. Always scan terms in the question and the answer choices. Go back to the question and read carefully. Know exactly what the question is asking before answering.
3. **Keep track of the time.** Answer the questions you know; mark the ones you don't. You can always go back to it later. When you start to get a momentum and feel good about the test, and then hit a really difficult question, it can break your confidence and stall your momentum. Some difficult or confusing questions may not even count! There are field test questions in every test that are just that, test questions, so they don't count. Don't let a silly field test question rob you of your momentum and confidence in answering the questions.
4. **If you don't know the answer, guess!** It's best to make an educated guess than to leave an answer blank.
5. **Stay calm and focused.** Don't let stress and anxiety affect your performance. Make sure you have had time to relax, get a good night's sleep, and have a good breakfast on the day of the test. Healthy food and a little bit of sugar and caffeine really does affect test performance, and they keep your brain sharp.