

Item Writing Workshop

ELA

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Mississippi Department of Education

VISION

To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens

MISSION

To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community

State Board of Education Goals

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2016-2020

1. All Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas
2. Every Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career
3. Every Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program
4. Every School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders
5. Every Community Effectively Uses a World-Class Data System to improve Student Outcomes
6. Every School and District is Rated “C” or Higher

Agenda

- Goals of Item Writing
- DOK levels
- Standard Alignment
- Bias/Sensitivity
- Item Basics
- Distractors and Rationales
- Vocabulary
- Editing Practice
- Extended Responses

Goals of Item Writing

Goals of Item Writing

- To develop an understanding of best practices in generating classroom assessments.
 - Each item must do the following tasks:
 - Measure what it claims to measure
 - Align to the standard
 - Make sense to all students
 - Be accessible to all students- Universal Design
- Equip Mississippi educators with the tools necessary to write high quality assessments aligned to the MS-CCRS.

Ice Breaker

Find the Fiction

- Jot down 3 statements about yourself: 2 true and 1 false.
- Introduce yourself to your team: name, school, and grade.
- Each member shares their 3 statements with the group.
- Using a “Round Robin” format, take turns finding the fiction.
- Teams stand after everyone has shared to signal you are finished with the task.

Depth of Knowledge

Depth of Knowledge

Webb's Depth of Knowledge

DOK 1

Recall & Reproduction

Who?
What?
Where?
When?

DOK 2

Basic Application of Skills and Concepts

How did it happen?
Why did it happen?
How does it work?
Why does it work that way?

DOK 3

Strategic Thinking

How can you use it?
Why can you use it?
What is the cause?
What if the effect?
What is the reason?
What is the result?

DOK 4

Extended Thinking

What is the impact?
What is the influence?
What is the relationship?
What if?
What would happen?
What could happen?
What do you think, feel, believe?



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DOK Game Show Analogy

How do you determine the DOK of an assignment?

What does this look like in a classroom?

What qualifies as deeper understanding?

DOK Game Show Analogy

What would be the game show equivalent of a DOK 1?

DOK Game Show Analogy



DOK Game Show Analogy

What would be the game show equivalent of a DOK 2?

DOK Game Show Analogy

TOP | CHEF

DOK Game Show Analogy

What would be the game show equivalent of a DOK 3?

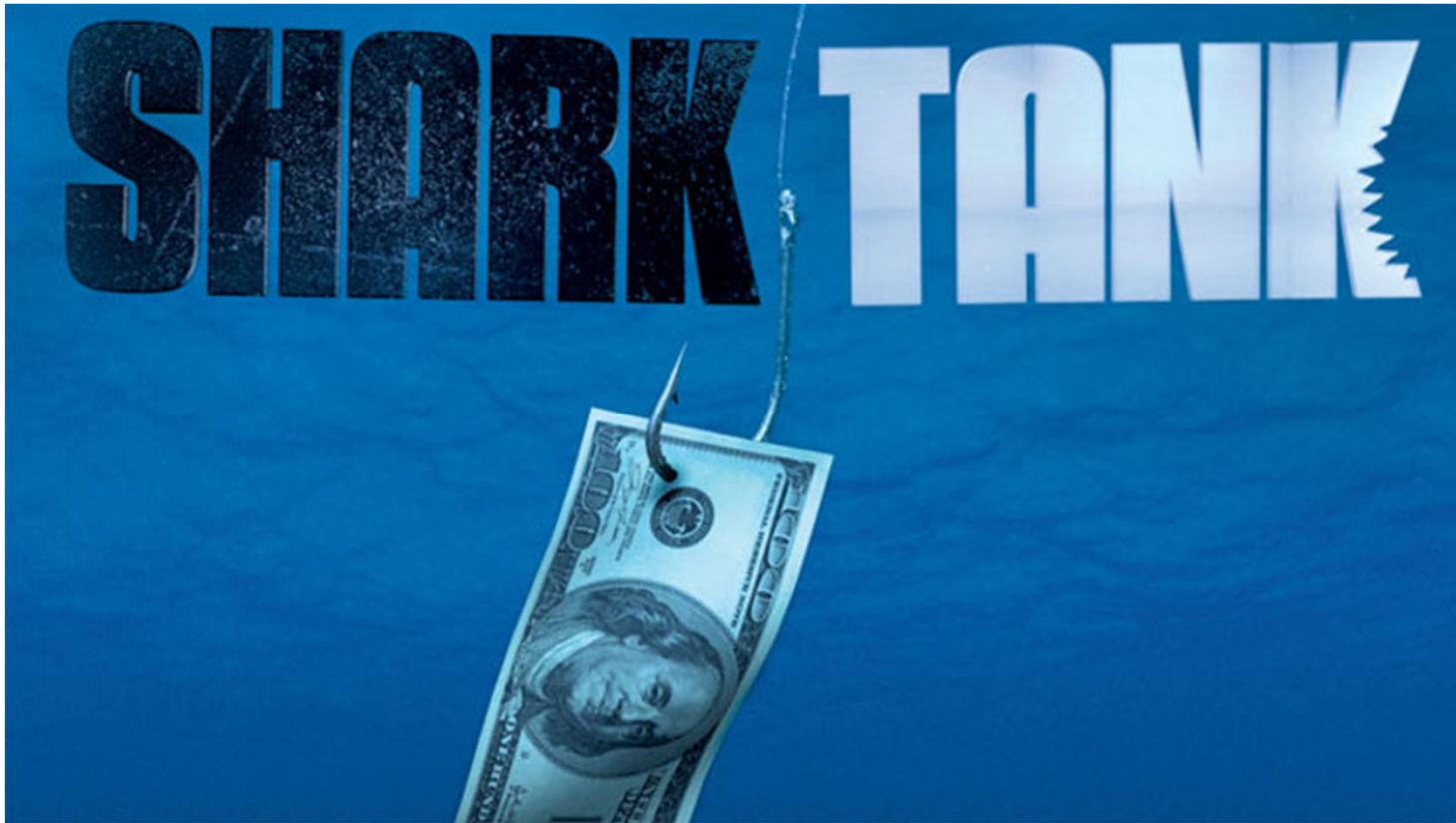
DOK Game Show Analogy



DOK Game Show Analogy

What would be the game show equivalent of a DOK 4?

DOK Game Show Analogy



DOK Misconceptions



DOK

- DOK is about depth & complexity- not difficulty!
 - **DOK 3- Describe** a model that you might use to represent the relationships that exists within the rock cycle. **(Requires deep understanding of the rock cycle and determination of how best to represent it.)**
 - **DOK 2- Describe** the difference between metamorphic and igneous rocks. **(Requires cognitive processing to determine the differences in the two rock types.)**
 - **DOK 1- Describe** three characteristics of metamorphic rocks. **(Simple recall)**

Notice the same verb is used at all three DOK levels.

Sorting DOK Levels

- Read each of the question stems.
- As a group, decide the DOK level of each question.
- Place the question stems under the appropriate DOK level heading.

DOK Level 1

- What did Louis Pasteur discover?
- What text structure is used to organize the passage?

DOK Level 2

- Which of the following describes a theme of the passage?
- What does the word threatening suggest about icebergs?
- How does the author introduce the idea of urban streams?

DOK Level 3

- Which two statements best summarize the central idea of the passage?
- What is the effect of the figurative language in the text?
- How does the author make a distinction between the two differing ideas throughout the text?

DOK Level ?

- How does the author convey Tony's accomplishments and determination to the reader?

Standard Alignment

Standard Alignment

- Items must align to a specific, grade-appropriate standard
- Use the language of the standard
 - Be aware of changes in standard vocabulary from grade level to grade level

KNOW YOUR STANDARDS

Standards are Grade Specific

- RL.7.6 Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.
- RL.8.6 Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.
- RL.9/10.6 Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

Standards Across the Grades

RL.6.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text based upon this determination.

- What is the theme of the text?
- What is the central idea of the text?
- Which statement is a supporting detail for the central idea?
- Which statement is a summary of the text??

RL.7.2/8.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an accurate summary of the text based upon this analysis.

- What is the theme of the story?
- What is the central idea of the text?
- How does the author develop the central idea?
- What statement is an accurate summary of the text?

RL.10.2: Determine the theme(s) or central idea(s) of a text and analyze in detail the development over the course of the text, including how details of a text interact and build on one another to shape and refine the theme(s) or central idea(s); provide an accurate summary of the text based upon this analysis.

- What are two themes in the text?
- What are two central ideas conveyed in the text?
- How does the author develop the central ideas?
- What statement is an accurate summary of the text?

Bias and Sensitivity

Bias/Sensitivity

- Some content or language is potentially insensitive to certain groups (not individuals)
- Requires prior knowledge
- Examples
 - Sexuality
 - Religious Topics
 - Violence/War
 - Stereotypes

Bias/Sensitivity Practice

- Which of the following item stems could be constructed as being biased?
 - A. Sam made an 85% on his first quiz.
 - B. Lucy measured 3.5 liters of water.
 - C. Sally made a birdie on the first hole.
 - D. Dan wanted to double his amount of money.

Bias/Sensitivity Practice

- Which of the following item stems could be constructed as insensitive?
 - A. Bill and his family drove 30 miles to the shopping mall.
 - B. Carlos and his family moved to Florida for the winter.
 - C. Jane and her family were playing a game at the table.
 - D. Marcus and his family were at the park on the swings.

Item Basics

What makes a strong test question?

- Meets the Industry Standards
 - What questions will the assessments' data answer?
 - What data does this produce that make this reliable and valid test?
- Meets the standard and addresses the skill appropriate for the grade level
 - The item meets the intended Depth of Knowledge
 - The item clearly refers back to the standard it is assessing

Anatomy of an Item

- Stem
 - The question itself that refers back to the standard/skill being assessed
- Options
 - Key- the correct answer
 - Should be clearly the ONLY correct answer
 - Distractors- plausible but incorrect
 - These can include evidence found in the incorrect paragraph reference
 - Common mistakes (for vocabulary items, common misunderstandings of a word)
 - These may NOT include answers that do not exist in the passage

Anatomy of an Item

- Rationales
 - Written by the item writer, not seen by the student
 - Give plausible explanations as to why a distractor could be chosen by a student

Item Basics

- Alignment to standard, may use the verb from the standard
- State the stem positively, avoiding negatives when possible
- Written as a question not a completion statement
- Parallel construction for options

Item Basics

- Students should not have to read the choices in order to interpret the question
- Avoid using
 - Absolutes
 - None of the above
 - All of the above
 - Best and/or most
 - Only use in referring to evidence from the text, but use sparingly
- “What” or “Which” or “Select”
- Eliminate any unnecessary or nonfunctional words

Item Basics

- Avoid cluing and clang associations
 - A key word from the stem that appears in only one option (cluing) or in the correct option (clang).
 - This can mislead the student.
- Put alternative options in a logical order
 - Shortest to longest, vice-versa, alternate, numerical, or alphabetical order
- Graphics should be clear and labeled

Different Types of Items

- **Multiple Choice**
 - 4 answer choices
- **Multi-Select**
 - 5 or 7 answer choices (2 of 5; 3 of 7)
- **EBSR (Two Part Evidence Based Select Response)**
 - Part A/Part B Questions; only 4 answer choices in each part
- **Technology Enhanced**
 - Drag and Drop, Hot Text, Click Boxes

EBSR Example

Part A Question: Which statement expresses a theme of the story?

- A. Everyone has strength.**
- B. Do not be afraid of others.**
- C. We can all learn from others**
- D. Believe in the wisdom of others.**

Part A: The skills of reading carefully, making inferences, and applying understanding of a text are essential for college and career readiness. This EBSR question allows students to demonstrate comprehension of one of the themes of the text: that everyone has strengths. The item advances assessment by asking students to offer proof of their answer as demonstrated by the inclusion of a Part B.

EBSR Example

Part B Question: Which detail from the story provides evidence for the answer to Part A?

- A. B. The tiny mosquito is not afraid of the cricket.**
- B. The mighty mosquito saves the cricket's lodge.**
- C. The scary cougar learns to leave the cricket alone.**
- D. The tough cougar believes the cricket in the end.**

Part B: Part B asks students to identify a detail from the text that supports the student's understanding of theme as expressed in Part A, illustrating one of the key shifts in CCSS assessment: use of textual evidence.

Technology Enhanced-Drag and Drop

Drag character traits from the column on the left to the character the trait describes. Every trait will be used once.

Agitated
Bossy
Giving
Jealous

Mary	Sarah

Technology Enhanced-Click Boxes

Select the character traits that match each character.

	Mary	Sarah
Agitated		
Bossy		
Grateful		
Jealous		

Technology Enhanced-Hot Text

Select the two answer choices from paragraph 6 that support the author's claim that people are working to protect coral reefs.

In Australia, the Great Barrier Marine Park Authority teaches people about coral reefs firsthand. Think about visiting a zoo. Can you take a lion home with you? Of course not! Coral reef parks help visitors and locals learn how to enjoy the reefs without harming them by following simple conservation rules. Visitors learn that they should never touch or take anything from the reef and that boats should stay far away from marine life. Watching whales, dolphins, and turtles can be fun. But it needs to be done in a way that does not disturb the animals.

Distractors and Rationales

Distractors and Rationales

- Write distractors to be clearly wrong but plausible
- Write rationales that show why a student might choose this distractor based on the text (making it plausible), then why it is specifically wrong (not simply that it is not correct because there is another right answer).
 - Doing the rationales in this way will help ensure usable distractors

Distractors and Rationales

The rationale statement explains what misunderstanding is the basis for the option and may include the reason the option is incorrect.

Strong Rationales vs. Weak Rationales

Strong	Weak
Students might choose this option if they did not understand that the character was joking rather than truly angry.	The character was not angry, so this is not correct.
Students might assume that the first sentence of a passage tells the main idea, but in this case the first paragraph is an anecdote that introduces the main idea.	This option is incorrect because it was a detail rather than the main idea.
Students might choose this option if they are using outside knowledge of the phrase, but it is incorrect because the phrase is not being used in that way in the passage.	This is not the meaning of the word in this context.

Distractors and Rationales

Stem: According to the passage, bee hummingbirds build tiny nests. Which two sentences best support this statement?

Options:

- A. They are smaller than peas.
- B. They are only an inch around.
- C. They weight less than a penny.
- D. They have been found on a clothespin.
- E. They are made of cobwebs and bits of bark.

Key: B and D

Rationale A Student who choose this answer misread the passage. This is a fact that appears in the same

paragraph, but it refers to the size of the eggs.

Rationale B This is a correct answer. Being an inch around describes how tiny they are.

Rationale C This is a fact that refers to the weight of the hummingbird, not its nest.

Rationale D This is a correct answer. They would have to be tiny to fit on a clothespin.

Rationale E This fact from the paragraph refers to what the nests are made from, not their size.⁵²

Vocabulary

Assessing Vocabulary

Reading standard Vocabulary items focus on determining the meaning of words using **context**.

Language standard Vocabulary items focus on how the meaning was determined (L4) and word/phrase usage (L5)

[MDE Vocabulary Guidelines](#)

Assessing Vocabulary

Criteria for selecting vocabulary words:

- Words needed to fully comprehend text
- Words with enough context
- Words likely to appear in future texts from any content area or are a part of a word family or semantic network (e.g., secure, insecure, security)
- Words that are up to two grade levels above student's instructional level may be used in the question stem; words for answer choices should be on or below grade level
- EDL Core Vocabulary / Children's Writers Word Book

Assessing Vocabulary

Which option below provides enough context to determine the meaning of the underlined word?

- “I’ve listened to countless hours of music—vibrant music pouring into my ears from MP3 players, CDs, and radios.
- “Maria cowered over her young, frightened out of her wits.”

Assessing Vocabulary

- RI4/RL4 Question Stems
 - Read the sentence from paragraph 4.
[Insert Sentence]
What is the meaning of the word catapult as it is used in this sentence?
 - What is the meaning of particular as it is used in paragraph 7?

Assessing Vocabulary

Read the following sentence from paragraph 7.

“The rabbit scampered through the pasture when it saw us approaching.”

What is the meaning of scampered as it is used in this sentence?

- A. Dug
- B. Played
- C. Ran
- D. Screamed

Assessing Vocabulary

- L4 Stem Example:
 - Which quotation from the passage would help the reader understand the meaning of the word scampered?
 - Which word or phrase in paragraph 7 helps the reader understand the meaning of the word scampered?

Assessing Vocabulary

- L5 Stem Example:
 - Which word means the same as scampered as it is used in the passage?
 - What does the poet mean when she says “and stop to feed itself at Tanks” in the poem?
 - Which word has the same connotation as the word jauntily in paragraph 8?

Assessing Vocabulary

- L6 Stem Example:
 - What is the meaning of the word scampered in paragraph 7?
 - Why does the author use the phrase “complaining all the while” in the stanza four?
 - What does photosynthesis mean when referring to phytoplankton?

Editing Practice

Editing Practice

Reword the following question.

In 1850, Adolphe Chattin, the professor of pharmacy in Paris, believed that goiter resulted from an inadequate amount of iodine in the diet. The thyroid is part of which body system?

Editing Practice

Simplified, unbiased, correct...

In what part of the body system is the thyroid located?

Editing Practice

Correct the following item.

Which of the following must be true of a right triangle?

- A. The angles must sum to 360 degrees
- B. All 3 sides must be equal
- C. The height must be half of the base
- D. There must be one right angle

Editing Practice

Correct the following item.

“In fact, they have been trying to copy such natural wonders.”
What does natural wonders mean as it is used in this sentence?

- A. products inspired by natural objects
- B. events in nature that remain unexplained
- C. unique abilities within the animal kingdom
- D. impressive geographical feature found in nature

Editing Practice

Correct the following item.

How does Jacob get the items that he wants in the story?

- A. He asks his mom.
- B. He approaches his dad for the money.
- C. He earns the money doing chores.
- D. He steals the money from his mom's purse and buys what he wants.

Group Practice

Group Item Writing

- Read your grade specific passage.
- With your team, generate a multiple choice item with answer choices that align to a standard.
- Include rationales for each incorrect answer.

Item Writing Cheat Sheet

- Item Types: Multiple Choice, Multi-Select (2 of 5/3 of 7), 2 part; technology enhanced
- Each item should have the stem, options, 1 correct answer, and rationales for each option.
- Reminders: Order options short to long, alphabetical order, or the quotations in the passage should be in the order they appear in the text.
- When testing vocabulary, introduce the question by giving the paragraph # and sentence the word appears in.
- Refrain from using “best” or “most” and write succinct, clear questions.

Group Item Writing

- With another team, share your items and rationales.
- Analyze questions and answers. Do they align to the standard?
- Are items following best practices in item development?

Extended

Response

Extended Response Basics

Three types of writing students are assessed on:

- Argument
 - Reasoned, logical way of demonstrating that the author's position/belief/conclusion is valid
 - Used for many purposes:
 - Change a reader's point of view
 - Bring about some action of the reader's part
 - Ask the reader to accept the writer's explanation or evaluation of a concept, issue, or problem

Extended Response Basics

- Informative/explanatory
 - Conveys information accurately
 - Help readers better understand a procedure/process
 - Provide readers with a better comprehension of a concept
 - Increase the reader's knowledge/understanding of a subject

Extended Response Basics

- Narrative
 - Conveys experiences, either real or imaginary
 - Can be used to inform, entertain, instruct, or persuade
 - Can take the form of:
 - Fictional stories, biographies, anecdotes
 - Description of scenes, objects, or people
 - Descriptions of step-by-step instructions
 - Accurate accounts of events, etc.

Crafting a Good Prompt

- Consider what the standard you are assessing when drafting the writing prompt, both writing and reading.
- Consider what kinds of writing you want students to do. Do you want your students to define, illustrate, compare, analyze, or evaluate? Prompts must clearly direct students as to the kind of writing they will have to do.
- Requires students to include evidence from the passage in their response

Crafting a Good Prompt

- Consider the time limitation for the assessment.
 - Can this prompt be fully answered in the allotted time?
- Use the language of the standard when appropriate
- Consider the scoring rubric
 - Will the prompt work within the scoring rubric guidelines?

Crafting a Good Prompt

- Craft each sentence carefully to ensure there is no room for misunderstanding.
 - If you ask students to analyze how a myth influenced painters and sculptors during the first century of the Renaissance, do you want students to examine the works themselves or the artists that produced them? A slip in word choice or careless placement of a modifier can confuse students as to what, precisely, you are asking them to do.
- Try to write an outline for the assignment yourself. If you can't do it, neither can the student.

MAAP Template for Writing Prompts

- Intro for prompts: “Read the following prompt and write your complete response in the answer document.”
- Ideas for the start of prompts
 - You have read a passage on Write an essay What does this/Respond to the claim that/Explain why/how...
 - In the passage, (title of passage) Write an essay/What does this/Respond to the claim that/Explain why/how
 - You have read (title of passage), a passage about Write an essay/What does this/Respond to the claim that/ Explain why/how

MAAP Template for Writing Prompts

- The last sentence of the prompt: Provide key details and examples from the passage to support your writing/response.
- The second paragraph of the prompt: Your writing will be scored based on the development of ideas, organization of writing, and language conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Sample Prompt- W.1, RL.2, & RL.1

The student has read an excerpt from *The Emperor's New Clothes* by Geraldine Carter (adapted from Hans Christian Andersen).

Read the following prompt and write your complete response in the answer document.

You have read an excerpt from *The Emperor's New Clothes* by Geraldine Carter (adapted from Hans Christian Andersen). A claim could be made that the theme of this passage is that foolish pride caused problems for several characters in the story. Write an essay defending this claim. Provide key details and examples from the passage to support your response.

Your writing will be scored based on the development of ideas, organization of writing, and language conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Sample Prompt

Informative, Grade 7: Read the prompt below and then write your response.

The excerpt from “Japan: Enchantment of the World” discusses the various types of animals found in Japan and its many islands. Based on what you have read, write an essay explaining how unique species of animals developed in Japan and why the islands have so many different kinds of animals. Provide key details and examples from the passage to support your response.

Your writing will be scored based on the development of ideas, organization of writing, and language conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Create a Prompt

Use the passage at your table to create an extended response item for informative writing. Consider...

- Writing standard prompt will address
- Primary reading standard

Resources

- Mississippi College Career Ready Standards
<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>
- EDL Core Vocabularies in Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies
<http://amzn.com/155855811X>
- Depth of Knowledge: ELA
<http://wat.wceruw.org/Tutorial/LangArtsDOKDef.aspx>
- Project Style Guides (provided by Questar)
- Item specification sheets (assignment)

Performance

Task

Item Writing Cheat Sheet

- Item Types: Multiple Choice, Multi-Select (2 of 5/3 of 7), 2 part; technology enhanced
- Each item should have the stem, options, 1 correct answer, and rationales for each option.
- Reminders: Order options short to long, alphabetical order, or the quotations in the passage should be in the order they appear in the text.
- When testing vocabulary, introduce the question by giving the paragraph # and sentence the word appears in.
- Refrain from using “best” or “most” and write succinct, clear questions.

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Before you leave...

- **Complete and Turn in Task Card**
 - Task 1-Edit Item
 - Task 2-Create Multiple Choice Item
 - Task 3- Create Technology Enhanced Item
 - Task 4-Create Extended Response Item
- **Turn in Passages**