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Multistate Standard-Setting Technical Report

PRAXIS™ MIDDLE SCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (5047)

Licensure and Credentialing Research

ETS

Princeton, New Jersey

March 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To support the decision-making process of education agencies establishing a passing score (cut score) for the Praxis™ Middle School English Language Arts (5047) test, research staff from Educational Testing Service (ETS) designed and conducted a multistate standard-setting study.

PARTICIPATING STATES

Panelists from 18 states and Washington, DC were recommended by their respective education agencies. The education agencies recommended panelists with (a) experience as either English teachers or college faculty who prepare English teachers and (b) familiarity with the knowledge and skills required of beginning English teachers.

RECOMMENDED PASSING SCORE

ETS provides a recommended passing score from the multistate standard-setting study to help education agencies determine an appropriate operational passing score. For the Praxis Middle School English Language Arts test, the recommended passing score¹ is 81 out of a possible 120 raw-score points. The scaled score associated with a raw score of 81 is 164 on a 100–200 scale.

¹ Results from the two panels participating in the study were averaged to produce the recommended passing score.

To support the decision-making process for education agencies establishing a passing score (cut score) for the Praxis™ Middle School English Language Arts (5047) test, research staff from ETS designed and conducted a multistate standard-setting study in March 2013 in Princeton, New Jersey. Education agencies² recommended panelists with (a) experience as either English teachers or college faculty who prepare English teachers and (b) familiarity with the knowledge and skills required of beginning English teachers. Eighteen states and Washington, DC (Table 1) were represented by 28 panelists. (See Appendix A for the names and affiliations of the panelists.)

Table 1
Participating Jurisdictions and Number of Panelists

Alaska (2 panelists)	North Carolina (2 panelists)
Arkansas (2 panelists)	North Dakota (1 panelist)
Delaware (1 panelist)	Rhode Island (1 panelist)
Hawaii (1 panelist)	South Dakota (2 panelists)
Kansas (1 panelist)	Utah (2 panelists)
Kentucky (2 panelists)	Vermont (2 panelists)
Louisiana (1 panelist)	Washington, DC (2 panelists)
Maryland (1 panelist)	West Virginia (1 panelist)
New Hampshire (2 panelists)	Wyoming (1 panelist)
Nevada (1 panelist)	

The following technical report contains three sections. The first section describes the content and format of the test. The second section describes the standard-setting processes and methods. The third section presents the results of the standard-setting study.

ETS provides a recommended passing score from the multistate standard-setting study to education agencies. In each jurisdiction, the department of education, the board of education, or a designated educator licensure board is responsible for establishing the operational passing score in accordance with applicable regulations. This study provides a recommended passing score,³ which represents the combined judgments of two panels of experienced educators. Each jurisdiction may want to consider the recommended passing score but also other sources of information when setting the final

² States and jurisdictions that currently use Praxis were invited to participate in the multistate standard-setting study.

³ In addition to the recommended passing score averaged across the two panels, the recommended passing scores for each panel are presented.

Praxis Middle School English Language Arts passing score (see Geisinger & McCormick, 2010). A jurisdiction may accept the recommended passing score, adjust the score upward to reflect more stringent expectations, or adjust the score downward to reflect more lenient expectations. There is no *correct* decision; the appropriateness of any adjustment may only be evaluated in terms of its meeting the jurisdiction's needs.

Two sources of information to consider when setting the passing score are the standard error of measurement (SEM) and the standard error of judgment (SEJ). The former addresses the reliability of the Praxis Middle School English Language Arts test score and the latter, the reliability of panelists' passing-score recommendation. The SEM allows a jurisdiction to recognize that any test score on any standardized test—including a Praxis Middle School English Language Arts test score—is not perfectly reliable. A test score only *approximates* what a candidate truly knows or truly can do on the test. The SEM, therefore, addresses the question: How close of an approximation is the test score to the *true* score? The SEJ allows a jurisdiction to gauge the likelihood that the recommended passing score from a particular panel would be similar to the passing scores recommended by other panels of experts similar in composition and experience. The smaller the SEJ, the more likely that another panel would recommend a passing score consistent with the recommended passing score. The larger the SEJ, the less likely the recommended passing score would be reproduced by another panel.

In addition to measurement error metrics (e.g., SEM, SEJ), each jurisdiction should consider the likelihood of classification errors. That is, when adjusting a passing score, policymakers should consider whether it is more important to minimize a false-positive decision or to minimize a false-negative decision. A false-positive decision occurs when a candidate's test score suggests he should receive a license/certificate, but his actual level of knowledge/skills indicates otherwise (i.e., the candidate does not possess the required knowledge/skills). A false-negative decision occurs when a candidate's test score suggests that she should not receive a license/certificate, but she actually does possess the required knowledge/skills. The jurisdiction needs to consider which decision error is more important to minimize.

Middle School English Language Arts (5047)

Test at a Glance

Test Name	Middle School English Language Arts		
Test Code	5047		
Time	160 minutes: 130 minutes for Selected Response (SR) section + 30 minutes for Constructed Response (CR) section		
Number of Questions	110 SR questions and 2 CR questions		
Format	The SR section, which accounts for 75% of the total test score, consists of single-selection multiple-choice questions with four options, as well as innovative question types, which may include multiple-selection multiple-choice, order/match, audio stimulus, table/grid, select in passage, and video stimulus. The CR section accounts for 25% of the total test score.		
	Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percent of Examination
	I. Reading	50 SR and 1 CR	46%
	II. Language Use and Vocabulary	16 SR	11% SR
	III. Writing, Speaking, and Listening	26 SR	18% SR
	IV. English Language Arts Instruction	18 SR and 1 CR	25%

About This Test

The Middle School English Language Arts test measures whether prospective middle school English language arts teachers have the standards-relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities believed necessary for competent professional practice. Aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts, the test measures examinees' skills and knowledge of concepts relevant to four categories: reading, including the study of literature (i.e., stories, drama, and poetry) and informational texts (i.e., literary nonfiction, such as essays, biographies, and speeches); use of the English language, including conventions of standard English and vocabulary development; writing, speaking, and listening; and English language arts instruction. The 110 selected response questions will address all of these categories. The two constructed response (CR) questions, or short essays, will also address the first and fourth categories, reading and English language arts instruction. The first CR question will ask examinees to interpret a piece of literature or informational text; the second will ask examinees to discuss approaches to teaching reading or writing, given a particular student writing sample or classroom context.

This test may contain some questions that will not count toward your score.

Topics Covered

I. READING

A. General Knowledge

- Knows the major works, authors, and contexts of United States, British, and world literature appropriate for adolescents.
 - Identify the authors and titles of major works of fiction, poetry, drama, and literary nonfiction appropriate for adolescents.
 - Identify the historical or literary context of major works of fiction, poetry, drama, and literary nonfiction appropriate for adolescents.
- Understands the defining characteristics of literary genres (e.g., poetry, literary nonfiction, drama).
 - Identify typical characteristics of a genre.
 - Apply correct terminology for a genre (e.g., stanza vs. paragraph).
 - Compare and contrast different genres.
- Knows the defining characteristics of major subgenres (e.g., sonnet, historical fiction, functional text).
 - Identify characteristics of sub-genres through distinctions in form or content (e.g., sonnets vs. ballads, satire vs. realism).
 - Differentiate between two sub-genres (e.g., historical fiction and science fiction).

B. Literature

- Understands how literal and inferential interpretations of a literary text can be supported with textual evidence.
 - Comprehend the literal meaning of a text.
 - Draw inferences from a text.
 - Determine the textual evidence that supports an analysis of what a text says or implies.
- Understands how a theme is developed within and across works from a wide variety of literary genres and other media.
 - Identify the theme of a given text.
 - Analyze how a theme is developed throughout one or more works.
 - Recognize universal themes from myths, traditional stories, or religious works and how they are rendered or alluded to in contemporary works.
- Understands how literary elements (e.g., characterization, setting, plot development) contribute to the meaning of a text.
 - Analyze the impact of differences in the points of view of characters and readers.
 - Analyze the structure of a plot.
 - Analyze how setting contributes to mood, tone, and conflict.
 - Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or story events impact meaning.
 - Analyze the text for the use of indirect and direct characterization.

- Understands how word choice (e.g., figurative, connotative, or informal language) contributes to the meaning and tone of a literary text.
 - Distinguish between connotation and denotation in a text.
 - Identify examples of various types of figurative language (e.g., extended metaphor, imagery, hyperbole).
 - Distinguish between what is directly stated in a text and what is meant (e.g., satire, irony, understatement).
 - Determine meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meaning.
 - Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.
- Understands how poetic devices and structure contribute to the meaning of a poem.
 - Analyze how poetic devices (e.g. rhyme scheme, rhythm, figurative language) contribute to the meaning of a poem.
 - Analyze how the structure of a poem contributes to its meaning (e.g. stanza, free verse, concrete poem).
- Understands literacy skills to support active reading of a literary text (e.g., making predictions, making connections with the text, summarizing).
 - Identify literacy skills to support active reading (e.g., text-to-self connection, prediction, summarizing).
 - Evaluate a summary of a passage.
 - Evaluate the strength of a prediction based on textual evidence.

C. Informational Texts & Rhetoric

- Understands how literal and inferential interpretations of an informational text can be supported with textual evidence.
 - Comprehend the literal meaning of a text.
 - Draw inferences from a text.
 - Determine the textual evidence that supports an analysis of what a text says or implies.
 - Compare two or more texts that provide conflicting facts or perspectives on the same topic.
- Knows a variety of organizational patterns that can be used to develop a central idea in an informational text.
 - Identify the central idea of a text.
 - Analyze how an author develops or refines a central idea in a text.
 - Identify the organizational pattern of a text (e.g., problem-solution, cause-effect, sequence order).
 - Analyze how ideas are connected and distinguished from one another in a text.
- Understands how word choice (e.g., figurative, connotative, or technical language) contributes to the meaning and tone of an informational text.
 - Distinguish between connotation and denotation in a text.
 - Identify the purpose of technical language in a text.
 - Distinguish between what is directly stated in an informational text and what is meant (e.g., satire, irony, understatement).
- Understands methods that authors use to convey purpose and perspective in informational texts.
 - Determine an author's point of view or purpose.
 - Analyze how an author uses rhetoric to support the point of view and/or purpose of a text.

II. LANGUAGE USE & VOCABULARY

- Understands the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, syntax, and mechanics (e.g., sentence types, verb tenses, punctuation).
 - Explain the function of different parts of speech.
 - Identify errors in standard English grammar, usage, syntax, and mechanics (e.g., inconsistent verb tense, non-parallel structure).
 - Justify grammar, usage, syntax, and mechanics choices (e.g., colon vs. semi-colon, its vs. it's, saw vs. seen).
 - Identify examples of different sentence types (e.g., simple, compound, compound-complex).
- Understands the use of affixes, context, and syntax to determine word meaning.
 - Apply knowledge of affixes to determine word meaning.
 - Use context clues to determine word meaning.
 - Apply knowledge of syntax to determine word meaning.
- Understands the use of print and digital reference materials to support correct language usage.
 - Determine the most appropriate print or digital reference material for a particular language usage task.
- Is familiar with variation in dialect and diction across regions, cultural groups, and time periods.
 - Identify variation in dialect and diction across regions, cultural groups, and time periods.

III. WRITING, SPEAKING, & LISTENING

- Understands the distinct characteristics of various types of writing (e.g., argumentative, informative/explanatory, narrative).
 - Distinguish among common types of writing.
 - Identify examples of common types of writing.
 - Identify typical characteristics of a type of writing.
- Understands that effective writing is appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
 - Identify the task, purpose, or intended audience for a piece of writing.
 - Choose the most appropriate type of writing for a particular task, purpose, or audience.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of a particular piece of writing for a specific task, purpose, or audience.
- Understands the characteristics of clear and coherent writing (e.g., development, organization, and style).
 - Identify details that help to develop a main idea.
 - Choose appropriate transitions.
 - Justify stylistic choices within a clear and coherent piece of writing.
- Knows effective research practices, including evaluating the credibility of multiple print and digital sources, gathering relevant information, and citing sources accurately.
 - Identify relevant information during research on a given topic.
 - Evaluate the credibility of a print or digital source.
 - Identify effective research practices.
 - Interpret a citation of a print or digital source.
 - Apply appropriate documentation techniques when quoting or paraphrasing source material in order to avoid plagiarism.

- Understands the effective delivery of a speech or presentation (e.g., eye contact, visual aids, tone).
 - Identify characteristics of effective delivery of a speech or presentation.
 - Evaluate the integration of multi-media components or visual displays in a particular presentation.
 - Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different media to present ideas.
- Understands methods that authors use to appeal to a specific audience.
 - Identify methods of appeal or persuasion (e.g., expert opinion, generalization, testimonial).
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of an author's methods of appeal.
- Understands what constitutes an effective written argument with strong supporting evidence.
 - Evaluate the argument and specific claims in an expository or persuasive text.
 - Assess whether an author's reasoning is sound.
 - Assess whether evidence is relevant, factual, and sufficient.
- Knows techniques for instructing students to participate productively in collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) and listen actively.
 - Identify a variety of techniques for instructing students to participate productively in collaborative discussions and listen actively (e.g., selecting age-appropriate topics, facilitating appropriate discussion behavior, ensuring accountability).
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of specific techniques for achieving particular discussion goals.
- Knows techniques for instructing students to communicate effectively and appropriately using technological tools (e.g., presentation software, blogs, wikis).
 - Identify a variety of techniques for instructing students to communicate effectively and appropriately using technological tools.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of specific technology-based techniques for achieving particular communication goals.
- Knows commonly used research-based approaches to grouping and differentiated instruction to meet specific instructional objectives in English language arts (e.g., literature circles, peer conferencing, collaborating with educators of exceptional/special needs or linguistically diverse children).
 - Identify approaches to grouping or differentiated instruction to meet specific instructional objectives in English language arts.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of specific grouping or differentiation approaches for achieving particular instructional goals.

IV. ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS INSTRUCTION

- Knows commonly used research-based approaches to supporting language acquisition and vocabulary development for diverse learners.
 - Recognize approaches to supporting language acquisition or vocabulary development.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of specific approaches to supporting language acquisition or vocabulary development.
 - Interpret research and apply it to particular instructional challenges related to language acquisition or vocabulary development.
- Is familiar with approaches to choosing texts for students based on ability and interests.
 - Identify approaches to choosing texts for students based on ability and interests.

- Understands commonly used research-based strategies for teaching adolescent reading (e.g., activating prior knowledge, modeling metacognitive practices).
 - Recognize commonly used research-based strategies for teaching adolescent reading.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of specific strategies to support a particular reading task.
 - Interpret research and apply it to particular reading instruction challenges.

- Understands commonly used research-based approaches to teaching components of writing (e.g., writing workshop, modeling).
 - Recognize commonly used research-based approaches to teaching components of writing.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of specific strategies to support a particular writing task.
 - Interpret research and apply it to particular writing instruction challenges.

- Knows approaches to and purposes of formative and summative assessment of reading, writing, speaking, and listening (e.g., use of rubrics, conferencing techniques, providing useful feedback).
 - Recognize a variety of approaches to and purposes of formative and summative assessment of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of a variety of approaches to formative and summative assessment of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
 - Interpret research and apply it to particular assessment challenges.

- Knows effective approaches to incorporating student input into the design and use of English language arts curriculum and assessments (e.g., literature selection, collaboratively designed rubrics).
 - Identify approaches to gathering student input, feedback, and reflection that motivate students and support the development of an inclusive learning environment.
 - Identify approaches to helping students become monitors of their own work and growth in speaking, listening, writing, reading, enacting, and viewing.