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Multistate Standard-Setting Technical Report

**PRAXIS™ ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS: CONTENT KNOWLEDGE
(5038)**

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™ English Language Arts: Content Knowledge (5038) test, research staff from Educational Testing Service (ETS) designed and conducted a multistate standard-setting study.

PARTICIPATING STATES

Panelists from 22 states, Washington, DC, and Guam 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 English Language Arts: Content Knowledge test, the recommended passing score¹ is 79 out of a possible 110 raw-score points. The scaled score associated with a raw score of 79 is 167 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™ English Language Arts: Content Knowledge (5038) test, research staff from ETS designed and conducted a multistate standard-setting study² in March 2013 in Princeton, New Jersey. Education agencies³ 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. Twenty-two states, Washington DC, and Guam (Table 1) were represented by 37 panelists. (See Appendix A for the names and affiliations of the panelists.)

Table 1
Participating Jurisdictions and Number of Panelists

Alaska (2 panelists)	New Jersey (2 panelists)
Arkansas (1 panelist)	North Carolina (2 panelists)
Delaware (2 panelists)	North Dakota (2 panelists)
Guam (1 panelist)	Pennsylvania (1 panelist)
Hawaii (1 panelist)	Rhode Island (2 panelists)
Idaho (1 panelist)	South Carolina (1 panelist)
Kansas (1 panelist)	South Dakota (2 panelists)
Louisiana (1 panelist)	Tennessee (2 panelists)
Maine (1 panelist)	Utah (2 panelists)
Mississippi (2 panelists)	Washington, DC (1 panelist)
Montana (2 panelists)	Wisconsin (2 panelists)
Nevada (1 panelist)	West Virginia (2 panelists)

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

² The multistate standard-setting study collected judgments for two related Praxis tests — Praxis English Language Arts: Content Knowledge (5038) and Praxis English Language Arts: Content and Analysis (5039). Separate technical reports were prepared for each test.

³ States and jurisdictions that currently use Praxis were invited to participate in the multistate standard-setting study.

accordance with applicable regulations. This study provides a recommended passing score,⁴ 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 Praxis English Language Arts: Content Knowledge 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 English Language Arts: Content Knowledge 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 English Language Arts: Content Knowledge 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 that 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.

⁴ In addition to the recommended passing score averaged across the two panels, the recommended passing scores for each panel are presented.

English Language Arts: Content Knowledge (5038)

Test at a Glance

Test Name	English Language Arts: Content Knowledge		
Test Code	5038		
Time	150 Minutes		
Number of Questions	130 Selected Response questions		
Format	The test includes single-selection multiple choice questions with four options. It also includes some of the following innovative question types: multiple-selection multiple choice, order/match, audio stimulus, table/grid, hot spots in text, and video stimulus.		
	Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percent of Examination
	I. Reading	49	38%
	II. Language Use and Vocabulary	33	25%
	III. Writing, Speaking, and Listening	48	37%

About This Test

The English Language Arts: Content Knowledge test measures whether prospective secondary 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 three 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; and writing, speaking, and listening. The 130 selected response questions will address all of these categories.

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

Topics Covered

I. READING

A. Literature

- Knows major works and authors of United States, British, World Literature, and Young Adult literature.
 - Identify the authors and titles of major works of fiction, poetry, drama, and literary nonfiction.
- Knows the historical, cultural, and literary contexts of major works and authors of United States, British, and world literature.
 - Identify the historical or literary context of major works of fiction, poetry, drama, and literary nonfiction.
- Understands the defining characteristics of primary literary genres.
 - Identify typical characteristics of a genre.
 - Apply correct terminology for a genre (e.g., stanza vs. paragraph).
- Knows the defining characteristics of major forms within each primary literary genre (e.g., poetry: ballad, haiku).
 - Identify characteristics of major forms within each genre through distinctions in structure and content (e.g., sonnets vs. ballads, satire vs. realism).
- Understands how textual evidence supports interpretations of a literary text.
 - Comprehend the literal and figurative meanings of a text.
 - Draw inferences from a text.
 - Determine the textual evidence that supports an analysis of a literary text.
- Understands how authors develop themes in a variety of genres.
 - Identify the theme(s) or central idea(s) of a given text.
 - Analyze how a theme or central idea 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 literary works.
- Understands how literary elements (e.g., characterization, setting, tone) contribute to the meaning of a text.
 - Analyze the impact of differences in the points of view of characters and/or narrators.
 - Analyze the structure of a plot.
 - Analyze how different elements contribute to mood, tone, and conflict.
 - Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or story events impact meaning.
 - Analyze the text for character development.
- Understands how figurative language contributes to the effect of a text.
 - Identify examples of various types of figurative language (e.g., extended metaphor, imagery, hyperbole).
 - Interpret figurative language in context and analyze its role in the text.
- Understands how poetic devices and structure contribute to the effect of a poem.
 - Analyze how poetic devices (e.g., rhyme scheme, rhythm, figurative language) contribute to meaning in a poem.
 - Analyze how structure (e.g., stanza, free verse, concrete poem) contributes to meaning in a poem.

- Understands how reading strategies (e.g., making predictions, making connections, summarizing) support comprehension.
 - 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.
- Knows commonly used research-based strategies for reading instruction (e.g., activating prior knowledge, modeling metacognitive practices, active reading).
 - Recognize commonly used research-based strategies for teaching reading (e.g., activating prior knowledge, modeling metacognitive practices).
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of specific strategies to support a particular reading task.
 - Interpret research and apply it to particular reading instruction challenges.
- Is familiar with various literary theories (e.g., reader-response, feminist criticism) for interpreting and critiquing literary texts.
 - Recognize ways literary theories are used to interpret and critique texts.
- Understands how a variety of organizational patterns and text structures can be used to develop a central idea in informational texts.
 - Identify the central idea of an informational text.
 - Analyze how an author develops or refines a central idea in an informational text.
 - Identify the organizational pattern of an informational text (e.g., problem-solution, cause-effect, sequence order).
 - Analyze how ideas are connected and distinguished from one another in an informational text.
 - Identify how text features (e.g., index, glossary, headings, footnotes, visuals) contribute to the central idea of an informational text.
- Understands how word choice contributes to the effect of an informational text.
 - Distinguish between connotation and denotation in an informational text.
 - Identify how technical language is used in an informational text.
 - Distinguish between what the text says explicitly and what may be inferred from the text.

B. Informational Texts & Rhetoric

- Understands how textual evidence supports interpretations of an informational text.
 - Comprehend literal and figurative meanings of an informational text.
 - Draw inferences from an informational text.
 - Determine the textual evidence that supports an analysis of an informational text.
- Understands rhetorical strategies that authors use to convey purpose and perspective in informational texts.
 - Determine an author's point of view or purpose in an informational text.
 - Analyze how an author uses rhetoric to support point of view and/or purpose in an informational text.
 - Recognize rhetorical strategies (e.g., satire, irony, understatement, hyperbole).

- 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.
 - Understand how technical or non-technical language is used to appeal to a targeted audience.
- Understands how authors develop and support a written argument.
 - Evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text.
 - Determine an author's purpose and evaluate an author's reasoning.
 - Evaluate whether evidence is relevant, factual, and/or sufficient.
 - Identify false statements and fallacious reasoning, (e.g., slippery slope, red herring, straw man, post hoc ergo propter hoc).
- Knows how to interpret media and non-print texts and how they influence an audience.
 - Evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats.
 - Determine persuasive techniques used in different media.

II. LANGUAGE USE & VOCABULARY

- Understands the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, syntax, and mechanics.
 - Explain the function of the different parts of speech.
 - Identify errors in standard English grammar, usage, syntax, and mechanics (e.g., inconsistent verb tense, non-parallel structure, sentence fragments, run-ons).
 - Justify grammar, usage, syntax, and mechanics choices (e.g., colon vs. semi-colon, its vs. it's, saw vs. seen, etc.).
 - Identify different components of sentences (i.e., clauses, phrases).
 - Identify different structures of sentences (i.e., simple, complex, compound).
- 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.
 - Analyze nuances of word meaning and figures of speech.
- Understands the use of print and digital reference materials to support and enhance language usage.
 - Determine the most appropriate print or digital reference material (spell checker, style manual, dictionary, glossary) for a particular language usage task.

- Is familiar with variations in dialect and diction across regions, cultural groups, and time periods.
 - Identify variation in dialect and diction across regions, cultural groups, and time periods.
 - Understand the concept of dialect and its appropriateness depending upon purpose and audience.
- Knows commonly used research-based approaches for supporting language acquisition and vocabulary development for diverse learners.
 - Recognize examples of commonly used research-based strategies for language acquisition or vocabulary development.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of specific strategies to support language acquisition or vocabulary development.
 - Interpret research and apply it to particular instructional challenges related to language acquisition or vocabulary development.
- Understands how awareness of task, purpose, and audience contribute to effective writing.
 - Identify how the task, purpose, or intended audience affects a piece of writing.
 - Choose the most appropriate type of writing for a task, purpose, and audience.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of a piece of writing for a specific task, purpose, and audience.
- Understands the characteristics of clear and coherent writing (e.g., supporting details, organization, conventions).
 - Identify details that develop a main idea.
 - Organize a text clearly and coherently.
 - Use varied and effective transitions throughout a text.
 - Justify stylistic choices within a clear and coherent piece of writing.
 - Introduce, develop, and conclude a text effectively.

III. WRITING, SPEAKING, and LISTENING

- Understands the distinct characteristics of various modes of writing (e.g., informative, argumentative).
 - Distinguish between common modes of writing (e.g., argumentative, informative/explanatory, narrative).
 - Identify examples of common types within modes of writing (e.g., journal, letter, essay, speech, blog).
 - Determine which mode is the most appropriate for an author's purpose and audience.
- Understands effective and ethical 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 (e.g., formulating a question, narrowing or broadening a topic, choosing effective sources).
 - Identify the components of a citation.
 - Cite source material appropriately.
 - Integrate information from source material to maintain the flow of ideas.

- Understands components of effective speech and presentation delivery.
 - Identify characteristics of effective delivery of a speech or presentation (e.g., eye contact, visual aids, tone).
 - Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different media to present ideas.
 - Determine whether information is presented clearly, concisely, and logically.
- Knows approaches for instructing students on the effective use of digital media to support and enhance communication.
 - Identify techniques for instructing students to choose and use technological tools (e.g., presentation software, blogs, wikis) for effective communication.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of specific technology-based strategies to achieve enhanced understanding of communication goals.
- Understands commonly used research-based approaches to teaching components of writing.
 - Recognize commonly used research-based strategies (e.g., writing workshop, modeling) for teaching components of the writing process.
 - Identify research-based strategies for teaching particular writing tasks.
 - Interpret research and apply it to particular writing instruction challenges.
- Understands purposes and methods of assessing reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
 - Recognize a variety of research-based 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).
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of a variety of research-based 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).
- Understands the components of effective oral communication in a variety of settings (e.g., one-on-one, in groups).
 - Identify a variety of techniques (e.g., selecting age-appropriate topics, facilitating appropriate discussion behavior, ensuring accountability) to ensure productive participation and active listening in collaborative discussions.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of specific strategies for students initiating and participating effectively in discussions.
- Knows that students bring various perspectives, cultures, and backgrounds to reading, writing, listening, and speaking, and how to incorporate that awareness into classroom instruction.
 - Use knowledge of students' individual and group identities to plan instruction responsive to their needs.
 - Know strategies for creating a safe environment for reading, writing, speaking, and listening to take place.