Literacy Instruction in the Elementary School

CREDIT HOURS
6

LEVEL
UPPER

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Before You Choose This UExcel Exam

Uses for the Examination

- Excelsior College, the test developer, recommends granting six (6) semester hours of upper-level undergraduate credit to students who receive a letter grade of C or higher on this examination.

- Other colleges and universities also recognize this exam as a basis for granting credit or advanced standing.

- Individual institutions set their own policies for the amount of credit awarded and the minimum acceptable score.

Exam-takers who have applied to Excelsior College should ask their academic advisor where this exam fits within their degree program.

Exam-takers not enrolled in an Excelsior College degree program should ask an admissions counselor where this exam fits within their intended degree program.

Examination Length and Scoring

The examination consists of approximately 130 questions, most of which are multiple choice; for samples of all the item types on this exam, see the sample items in the back of this guide. Some items are unscored, pretest items. The pretest items are embedded throughout the exam and are indistinguishable from the scored items. You will have three (3) hours to complete the exam. Your score will be reported as a letter grade.

UExcel Exam Resources

Excelsior College Bookstore

The Excelsior College Bookstore offers recommended textbooks and other resources to help you prepare for UExcel exams.

The bookstore is available online at (login required): www.excelsior.edu/bookstore

UExcel Practice Exams

The official UExcel practice exams are highly recommended as part of your study plan. Once you register for your UExcel exam, you are eligible to purchase the corresponding practice exam, which can be taken using any computer with a supported Web browser. Each practice exam includes two forms that you may take within a 180-day period.

Excelsior College Library

Enrolled Excelsior College students can access millions of authoritative resources online through the Excelsior College Library. Created through our partnership with the Sheridan Libraries of The Johns Hopkins University, the library provides access to journal articles, books, websites, databases, reference services, and many other resources. Special library...
pages relate to the nursing degree exams and other selected exams. To access it, visit www.excelsior.edu/library (login is required).

Our library provides:

- 24/7 availability
- The world’s most current authoritative resources
- Help and support from staff librarians

**Online Tutoring**

Excelsior College offers online tutoring through SMARTTHINKING™ to connect with tutors who have been trained in a variety of academic subjects. To access SMARTTHINKING, go to www.excelsior.edu/smarthinking. Once there, you may download a copy of the SMARTTHINKING Student Handbook as a PDF.

## Preparing for UExcel Exams

### Take Charge of Your Own Learning

At Excelsior College, independent, self-directed study supported by resources we help you find is not a new concept. We have always stressed to exam takers that they are acting as their own teacher, and that they should spend as much time studying for an exam as they would spend in a classroom and on homework for a corresponding college course in the same subject area.

Begin by studying the content outline contained in this content guide, at its most detailed level. You will see exactly which topics are covered, and where chapters on those topics can be found in the Recommended Resources. You will see exactly where you might need to augment your knowledge or change your approach.

The content outline, along with the Learning Outcomes for this exam and recommended textbooks, will serve as your primary resources.

### How Long Will It Take Me to Study?

A UExcel exam enables you to show that you've learned material comparable to one or more 15-week college-level courses. As an independent learner, you should study and review as much as you would for a college course. For a 3-credit course in a subject they don’t know, most students would be expected to study nine hours per week for 15 weeks, for a total of 135 hours.

### Study Tips

Become an active user of the resource materials. Aim for understanding rather than memorization. The more active you are when you study, the more likely you will be to retain, understand, and apply the information.

The following techniques are generally considered to be active learning:

- **preview or survey** each chapter
- **highlight or underline text** you believe is important
- **write questions or comments** in the margins
- **practice re-stating content** in your own words
- **relate what you are reading** to the chapter title, section headings, and other organizing elements of the textbook
- **find ways to engage** your eyes, your ears, and your muscles, as well as your brain, in your studies
- **study with a partner or a small group** (if you are an enrolled student, search for partners on MyExcelsior Community)
- **prepare your review notes** as flashcards or create recordings that you can use while commuting or exercising

When you feel confident that you understand a content area, review what you have learned. Take a second look at the material to evaluate your understanding. If you have a study partner, the two of you can review by explaining the content to each other or writing test questions for each other to answer. Review questions from textbook chapters may be helpful for partner or individual study, as well.

### Using UExcel Practice Exams

We recommend taking the first form of the practice exam when you begin studying, to see how much you already know. After taking the first practice exam, check your performance on each question and find out why your answer was right or wrong. This feedback will help you improve your knowledge of the subject and identify areas of weakness that you should address before taking the exam. Take the second form of the
practice exam after you have finished studying. Analyze your results to identify the areas that you still need to review.

Although there is no guarantee, our research suggests that students who do well on the practice exams are more likely to pass the actual exam than those who do not do well (or do not take advantage of this opportunity).

About Test Preparation Services
Preparation for UExcel® exams and Excelsior College® Examinations, though based on independent study, is supported by Excelsior College with a comprehensive set of exam learning resources and services designed to help you succeed. These learning resources are prepared by Excelsior College so you can be assured that they are current and cover the content you are expected to master for the exams. These resources, and your desire to learn, are usually all that you will need to succeed.

There are test-preparation companies that will offer to help you study for our examinations. Some may imply a relationship with Excelsior College and/or make claims that their products and services are all that you need to prepare for our examinations. Excelsior College is not affiliated with any test preparation firm and does not endorse the products or services of these companies. No test preparation vendor is authorized to provide admissions counseling or academic advising services, or to collect any payments, on behalf of Excelsior College. Excelsior College does not send authorized representatives to a student’s home nor does it review the materials provided by test preparation companies for content or compatibility with Excelsior College examinations.

To help you become a well-informed consumer, we suggest that before you make any purchase decision regarding study materials provided by organizations other than Excelsior College, you consider the points outlined on our website at www.excelsior.edu/testprep.

Preparing for This Exam

Prior Knowledge
A knowledge of content that would be included in such lower-level education courses as Foundations of Education, Educational Psychology, Orientation to Teaching and Instructional planning is assumed.

A knowledge of child development, some learning theory, and instructional planning an implementation, as well as practicum experience, would be helpful in learning the content of the examination.

Using the Content Outline
Each content area in the outline includes (1) the recommended minimum hours of study to devote to that content area and (2) the most important sections of the recommended resources for that area. These annotations are not intended to be comprehensive. You may need to refer to other chapters in the recommended textbooks. Chapter numbers and titles may differ in other editions.

This content outline contains examples of the types of information you should study. Although these examples are numerous, do not assume that everything on the exam will come from these examples. Conversely, do not expect that every detail you study will appear on the exam. Any exam is only a broad sample of all the questions that could be asked about the subject matter.

Using the Sample Questions and Rationales
Each content guide provides sample questions to illustrate those typically found on the exam. These questions are intended to give you an idea of the level of knowledge expected and the way questions are typically phrased. The sample questions do not sample the entire content of the exam and are not intended to serve as an entire practice test.
Recommended Resources

Recommended Resources

The resources and materials listed below were used by the examination development committee to verify all the questions on the exam. Excelsior College recommends you use these resources as the most appropriate information in ordering textbooks from the college’s bookstore (see p. 2 of this content guide). You should allow sufficient time to obtain resources and to study before taking the exam.

A word about textbook editions: Textbook editions listed in the UExcel content guides may not be the same as those listed in the bookstore. Textbook editions may not exactly match up in terms of table of contents and organization, depending upon the edition. However, our team of exam developers checks exam content against every new textbook edition to verify that all subject areas tested in the exam are still adequately available in the study materials. If needed, exam developers will list supplemental resources to ensure that all topics in the exam are still sufficiently covered.

Supplemental Resources

The Supplemental Resources listed in this content guide are recommended by the examination development committee to enhance your understanding of the subject or to provide clarification of topics presented in the content outline.

There are other additional, non-Excelsior College resources, such as open educational resources (OER), which can be found online to further enhance your study for the exam. OER includes additional textbooks, or online resources such as interactive and non-interactive courses, to help you learn the content. Any additional resources that you find independently online should be used to augment study—not as replacements for the Recommended Resources.

Public libraries may have some of the textbooks or may be able to obtain them for you through an interlibrary loan program, to reduce textbook costs. You should allow sufficient time to obtain resources and to study before taking the exam.

Textbooks

These textbooks were used by the examination development committee to verify all questions on the exam.


Note: the Book of Readings is available for free download at https://my.excelsior.edu/documents/78666/245056/Book_of_Readings_Literacy_Instructions_in_the_Elementary_Schoool.pdf/fea52fee-7dd8-9367-2c2d-447dbcb34dec


This exam has a Book of Readings, which is available for free download at:

https://my.excelsior.edu/documents/78666/245056/Book_of_Readings_Literacy_Instructions_in_the_Elementary_Schoool.pdf/fea52fee-7dd8-9367-2c2d-447dbcb34dec

Children’s Literature

The award-winning books listed below are available in public libraries and local bookstores. You will need to be familiar with all of these books. The examination will test your ability to use these books in elementary literacy instruction.

Chapter Books

1977 *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, by Mildred D. Taylor

1978 *Bridge to Terabithia*, by Katherine Paterson

1988 *Hatchet*, by Gary Paulsen
Reducing Textbook Costs

Many students know it is less expensive to buy a used textbook, and buying a previous edition is also an option. The Excelsior College bookstore includes a buyback feature and a used book marketplace, as well as the ability to rent digital versions of textbooks for as long as students need them. Students are encouraged to explore these and the many other opportunities available online to help defray textbook costs.

A Word About Open Educational Resources

Open educational resources (OER) are educational materials available for study at no cost on the Web. Some OER are available for anyone to access any time. Others, such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), require sign-up and are only available during certain windows. Please note that some MOOC providers offer certificates of completion or other products or services for a fee. No MOOC or other OER is a complete substitute for the content guide and officially Recommended Resources listed here in this content guide. However, by definition, MOOCs are essentially free of charge and include access to a main body of learning materials that may help you in your learning.

Being an independent learner preparing for credit by exam, you may not need any of the fee-based options that are offered elsewhere online. But if you are looking for a coherent academic course for self-study, lectures on specific topics, or audio or visual materials that fit your learning style better than print materials alone, a MOOC or other type of OER may be your answer. Keep in mind that none of these OER were designed by Excelsior, nor are they guaranteed to match the exam content outlines completely. They are simply another tool available in your study kit.

We highly encourage using the Recommended Resources. In the content outline, you will see that the topics in the exam are referenced to specific portions of recommended textbooks. Using OER alone will not ensure you’ve completely covered the content in the exam, or it may not cover some topics in sufficient-enough depth without the use of the formal, recommended textbooks.

If the OER course you choose does not include a textbook for reference and you do not have significant practical theory-based experience in the field of study,
use a college textbook to ensure adequate preparation for the exam, and use the exam’s content outline as a guide.

Combined with comparable college textbooks, OER provides you with a variety of choices in knowledge sources and learning experiences, to enhance your understanding of the subject matter.

Choosing Open Educational Resources
Most sites for university-based OER can be searched through www.ocwconsortium.org and/or www.oercommons.org.

Sites that specialize in Web courses designed by college professors under contract with the website sponsor, rather than in Web versions of existing college courses, include:

- www.education-portal.com
- www.opencourselibrary.org (abbreviated as OCL)

We have included specific courses that cover material for one or more UExcel® exams from the sites in the listings above. It’s worth checking these sites frequently to see if new courses have been added that may be more appropriate or may cover an exam topic not currently listed.

In addition, sites like Khan Academy (www.khanacademy.com) and iTunes U feature relatively brief lessons on very specific topics rather than full courses. Full courses are also available on iTunes U (http://www.apple.com/education/ipad/itunes-u/). We have chosen a few courses and collections for this listing.

Other Online Resources
This section of the OER Guide is provided to allow learners to independently search for resources. Send an e-mail to OER@excelsior.edu if you have questions about a resource’s credibility.

Open Online Textbooks
Boundless open textbooks
  https://www.boundless.com/open-textbooks/

BookBoon
  http://bookboon.com/en/textbooks-ebooks

Flatworld Knowledge
  http://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/#our-catalog

College Readiness
Khan Academy
  http://www.khanacademy.org/

Hippocampus
  http://www.hippocampus.org/

Open Course Library
  http://opencourselibrary.org/collg-110-college-success-course/

Study Aids
Education Portal
  http://education-portal.com/

Khan Academy
  http://www.khanacademy.org/

Annenberg Learner
  http://www.learner.org/

OpenCourseWare
  http://ocwconsortium.org/en/courses/search

OER Commons
  http://www.oercommons.org/

Open Course Library
  http://www.opencourselibrary.org/
General Description of the Examination

The UExcel Literacy Instruction in the Elementary School examination is based on material typically taught in a two-semester sequence of upper-level courses in elementary school reading and writing instruction. The content of the examination corresponds to course offerings such as Reading in the Elementary School, Writing in the Elementary School, Teaching of Literacy in the Elementary School, Methods of Teaching Reading, and Reading and Language Arts.

The examination measures knowledge and understanding of the fundamental concepts and principles guiding elementary school literacy instruction, including literacy development, constructing meaning, writing instruction, program implementation, and assessment and evaluation, as well as the ability to apply, synthesize and evaluate information, and the ability to read critically.

Those beginning to study for this exam should have an understanding of basic concepts in education and learning theory.

Learning Outcomes

After you have successfully worked your way through the recommended study materials, you should be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

1. Describe process-oriented and outcomes-based theories of teaching reading and writing.
2. Describe the psycholinguistic roots of language aptitude, discuss cultural influences on literacy development, and consider the role of literature in learning to read and write.
3. Outline stages of literacy development, and discuss the effectiveness of various language acquisition techniques.
4. Describe the various methods for identifying and comprehending words, including the use of cueing systems, vocabulary expansion, and strategies for monitoring reading.
5. Explain instructional activities fostering the knowledge and use of cueing systems and outline strategies for developing fluency.
6. Distinguish among the various ways of making and comprehending meaning.
7. Explain instructional techniques for constructing meaning and developing vocabulary.
8. Discuss particulars of writing instruction, such as the use of developmental patterns, making reading-writing connections, understanding the social nature of writing, and process approaches to writing.
9. Discuss other components of the writing classroom, such as environment; choice of activities; developing methods for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar usage; and presentation such as handwriting or keyboarding.
10. Discuss the role of the teacher as reflective decision maker in implementing a classroom literacy program.
11. Describe approaches to organizing and managing the literacy classroom, selecting instructional resources, responding to different developmental needs, and fostering home/school/community collaboration.
12. Discuss methods of literacy assessment and evaluation, explain principles of assessment, describe and evaluate types of observation and assessment tools, and discuss issues related to assessment, especially standardization.
Content Outline

The content outline describes the various areas of the test, similar to the way a syllabus outlines a course. To fully prepare requires self-direction and discipline. Study involves careful reading, reflection, and systematic review.

The major content areas on the Literacy Instruction in the Elementary School examination, the percent of the examination, and the hours to devote to each content area are listed below.

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<th>Percent of the Examination</th>
<th>Hours of Study</th>
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<td>II. Emergent Literacy/Beginning Reading</td>
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<td>III. Identifying and Understanding Words</td>
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<td>IV. Constructing Meaning: Comprehension and Response</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>41</td>
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<td>V. Writing Instruction</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>41</td>
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<td>VI. The Teacher as Reflective Decision Maker: Implementing a Classroom Literacy Program</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>VII. Assessment and Evaluation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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NOTE: Occasionally, examples will be listed for a content topic to help clarify that topic. However, the content of the examination is not limited to the specific examples given.

I. Theoretical Frameworks

**15 PERCENT OF EXAM  | 41 HOURS OF STUDY**

Fountas & Pinnell

Ch. 1, What is Guided Reading

Ch. 7, Using Guided Reading for Effective Teaching of English Language Learners

Reutzel & Cooter (2019)

Ch. 1, Effective Reading Instruction: The Teacher Makes the Difference

Ch. 2, Developing Children's Oral Language to Support Literacy

Ch. 3, Early Reading Instruction: Getting Started with the Essentials

Tompkins (2018)

Ch. 1, Becoming an Effective Literacy Teacher

Ch. 4, The Youngest Readers and Writers


Ch. 1, A Good Place to Begin—Examining Our Personal Perspectives

Ch. 2, Literacy and Students Who Are Learning English as a Second Language

A. Reading and writing as learning processes

1. Constructivist (social constructivist, response, schema)
2. Cognitive interactive
3. Behaviorist
B. Instructional Approaches
   1. Subskill (bottom-up, part-to-whole, text-based, behavioral)
   2. Holistic (top-down, whole-to-part, reader-based, psycholinguistic)
   3. Interactive
   4. Transactional (transactive)
   5. Balanced literacy
C. Language acquisition—relations among pragmatic, semantic, syntactic, and phonological systems
D. Written language acquisition (for example: print awareness, concepts about print, scribbling, invented spellings, symbolic and pictorial representations)
E. Interrelationships among the language arts (reading, writing, listening, speaking), literacy development, and content area learning
F. Language and cultural considerations (for example: dialect, second language, developmental variations)
G. The role of literature in learning to read and reading to learn

II. Emergent Literacy/Beginning Reading

A. Language acquisition (for example: developmental patterns, functions of language, print awareness, scribbling, invented or temporary spellings)
B. Concepts about print (for example: directionality, spacing, reading-writing connections)
C. Experiences with language (for example: lap reading, storytelling, environmental print, predictable books, shared book experiences, guided reading, interactive reading)
D. Phonemic awareness (for example: segmenting, blending, matching sounds to words, substitutions)
E. Alphabetic code (for example: consonants, vowels, onset/rime)
F. Sight vocabulary

III. Identifying and Understanding Words

A. Cueing systems
   1. Graphic cues (including sight vocabulary and phonics generalizations and definitions)
2. Syntactic cues (for example: contextual analysis, signal words)

3. Semantic cues (including structural [morphemic] analysis and contextual analysis)

B. Word meanings (for example: unfamiliar words, teaching vocabulary directly, independently discovering word meanings)

C. Monitoring strategies (for example: “Read to the end,” “Reread,” “Does it make sense?”)

D. Instructional activities for fostering the knowledge and use of cueing systems (for example: word walls, word banks, word sorts, onsets and rimes, cloze procedure)

E. Strategies for developing fluency (for example: choral reading, repeated reading, assisted reading)

IV. Constructing Meaning: Comprehension and Response

15 percent of exam | 41 hours of study

Fountas & Pinnell

Ch. 13, The Test Gradient
Ch. 15, Teaching for Systems of Strategic Actions in Guided Reading
Ch. 16, Teaching for Monitoring, Searching, and Self-Corrected Behaviors
Ch. 17, Teaching for Visual Processing Over Time
Ch. 18, Teaching for Phrased, Fluent Reading in Guided Reading Lessons
Ch. 20, Teaching for Comprehending

Reutzel & Cooter

Ch. 5, Reading Fluency
Ch. 7, Teaching Reading Comprehension

Tompkins:

Ch. 8, Promoting Comprehension: Reader Factors
Ch. 9, Promoting Comprehension: Text Factors

Book of Readings

Ch. 2, Literacy and Students Who Are Learning English as a Second Language
Ch. 5, Messages to Ground Zero: Children Respond to September 11, 2001

Ch. 6, African American Children’s Literature that Helps Students Find Themselves: Selection Guidelines for Grades K–3

Ch. 9, “I Just Need to Draw”: Responding to Literature across Multiple Sign Systems

Ch. 10, Invention, Convention, and Intervention: Invented Spelling and the Teacher’s Role

A. Elements that influence comprehension

1. Within the reader/writer
   a. Prior knowledge/schema
   b. Social and cultural experiences
   c. Motivation, attitude, interest
   d. Cognition and metacognition
   e. Reader response and stance

2. Within the text
   a. Text structure (narrative and expository)
   b. Genre (for example: poetry, fiction, nonfiction)
   c. Language (for example: vocabulary/concepts, dialect, imagery)
   d. Text difficulty (for example: predictability, sentence/passage length, topic)
   e. Text format/features (for example: title, table of contents, graphics, illustrations)

3. The context
   a. Location: home, school, and community
   b. Purpose (inquiry-based, efferent/aesthetic, teacher-centered, student-centered)
   c. Instructional frameworks (facilitating, modeling, scaffolding, guiding, questioning, directing)

B. Instructional strategies for constructing meaning

1. Organizational frameworks (pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading)
2. Comprehension strategies (for example: predicting, sampling, monitoring, self-questioning, reviewing, retelling, summarizing)

3. Specific activities and techniques
   a. Directed reading activity (DRA) and directed reading-thinking activity (DRTA)
   b. Guided and shared book experiences
   c. Graphic organizers (for example: semantic mapping and webbing, story maps, think sheets, story frames)
   d. Organizational tools (for example: SQ3R, QAR, K-W-L)
   e. Silent reading (for example: SSR)

C. Developing vocabulary
   1. Vocabulary acquisition
   2. Interconnections between vocabulary and comprehension
   3. Instructional components
      a. Direct vocabulary instruction (criteria for selection, semantic features analysis, word sorts, word maps)
      b. Contextualized (wide reading, life experiences, discussions)

V. Writing Instruction

15 PERCENT OF EXAM  |  41 HOURS OF STUDY

Fountas & Pinnell
   Ch. 2, Guided Reading Within a Multitext Approach

Reutzel & Cooter
   Ch. 2, Developing Children’s Oral Language to Support Literacy
   Ch. 8, Writing
   Ch. 11, Effective Reading Instruction and Organization in Grades K-3
   Ch. 12, Effective Academic Literacy Instruction in Grades 4-8

Tompkins
   Ch. 2, The Reading and Writing Processes

Ch. 4, The Youngest Readers and Writers
Ch. 6, Developing Fluent Readers and Writers
Ch. 8, Promoting Comprehension: Reader Factors
Ch. 10, Organizing for Instruction (section on implementing reading and writing workshop, only)

Book of Readings

Ch. 1, A Good Place to Begin—Examining Our Personal Perspectives
Ch. 3, Transforming Deficit Myths about Learning, Language, and Culture
Ch. 10, Invention, Convention, and Intervention: Invented Spelling and the Teacher’s Role

A. Developmental patterns of writing
B. Reading-writing connections
C. Social nature of writing (audience, voice, response)
D. Writing as process (for example: topic choice, drafting, editing, publishing)
E. Classroom environment (for example: centers, sharing space)
F. Activities (for example: journals, writer’s workshop, author's chair, guided writing, shared writing, interactive writing, word walls)
G. Spelling (for example: stages of spelling development)
H. Punctuation and grammar
I. Presentation (for example: handwriting, keyboarding)

VI. The Teacher as Reflective Decision Maker: Implementing a Classroom Literacy Program

15 PERCENT OF EXAM  |  41 HOURS OF STUDY

Fountas & Pinnell
   Ch. 10, Using Assessments to Form Dynamic Groups and Documenting Reading Progress
   Ch. 12, Creating a Collection of Texts to Support Literary Learning
   Ch. 21, Building a Community of Readers Across the Grades
A. Approaches to literacy instruction

1. Basal reader programs
2. Language experience approach (LEA)
3. Phonics approaches—explicit (synthetic) and implicit (analytic)
4. Literature-based approaches
   a. Individualized or self-selected reading

b. Literature discussion groups (for example: literature circles, book clubs, response groups)
c. Integrated approaches (for example: whole language and thematic units)

5. Reading and writing workshop
6. Technology-based approaches (for example: Internet, CD-ROM, video, e-mail, publishing)

B. Classroom organization and management

1. Grouping (for example: heterogeneous grouping, dynamic grouping, cooperative learning, peer tutoring)
2. Learning centers
3. Leveling texts
4. Reading and writing areas (including a library)
5. Planning (for example: scheduling, grouping, learning sequences)
6. Time management (for example: instruction, interacting with students)
7. Themes, units, lessons

C. Evaluating and selecting instructional resources

1. Literature (for example: picture books, chapter books)
2. Textbooks
3. Teacher-made materials
4. Technology
5. Primary sources (for example: historical documents, interviews, photographs)
6. Other media (for example: newspapers, commercial materials, kits, games)

D. Responding to all learners

1. Meeting the needs of diverse learners (for example: culturally and linguistically diverse students, students with special needs, gifted students)
2. Intervention programs (for example: Reading Recovery, Success For All)
3. Collaboration with specialists (for example: special education teachers, bilingual/ESL teachers, literacy specialists)
4. Pull-out and inclusive settings

E. Home/school/community collaboration
   1. Fostering literacy at home
   2. Parent involvement at school
   3. Community involvement (for example: businesses, museums, theaters)

VII. Assessment and Evaluation

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A. Principles to guide assessment (for example: instructional practices, national standards, state standards)

B. Observation and assessment tools
   1. Observation of child’s behavior in a variety of settings (kid watching, anecdotal record)
   2. Reading miscue analysis/running record
   3. Informal reading inventory (IRI)
Sample Questions

The sample questions give you an idea of the level of knowledge expected in the exam and how questions are typically phrased. They are not representative of the entire content of the exam and are not intended to serve as a practice test.

Rationales for the questions can be found on pages 18–23 of this guide. In that section, the correct answer is identified and each answer is explained. The number in parentheses at the beginning of each rationale refers to the corresponding section of the content outline. For any questions you answer incorrectly, return to that section of the content outline for further study.

1. Which best defines schema?
   1) a strategy to teach comprehension
   2) a modeling process used by teachers
   3) a method of organizing a classroom assessment program
   4) a framework of acquired knowledge drawn from life experiences

2. What is the value of understanding the stages of invented spelling?
   Teachers are able to
   1) assess children’s emerging literacy development.
   2) participate in literacy-related classroom research.
   3) become participants in current instructional trends.
   4) focus on patterned word recognition instruction.

3. When should students who are learning English as a second language be introduced to reading and writing?
   1) as soon as they enter the classroom situation
   2) as soon as they have a survival vocabulary
   3) only after they have listening and speaking proficiency
   4) only after they have developed a 200–300 word listening/speaking vocabulary

4. According to research, how would an emergent writer be likely to first write the word “clock”?
   1) clk
   2) cluk
   3) coc
   4) cok

5. Which best defines directionality?
   1) ability to follow instructions
   2) left-right, top-bottom orientation
   3) distinguishing lowercase letters
   4) auditory sequencing
6. How are phonic generalizations useful for children learning to read?
   1) They guide students in the use of the dictionary.
   2) They provide students with tools to approximate the pronunciation of a new word.
   3) They demonstrate to students the regularity of phoneme-grapheme correspondences.
   4) Learning phonic generalizations enhances memory skills.

7. A student reads the text, “The troll huddled beneath the bridge waiting for his next meal.” The student sees the word huddled and says jumped. This miscue represents a reliance on which cuing system?
   1) graphic
   2) orthographic
   3) phonic
   4) syntactic

8. According to Theodore Clymer, how should phonic generalizations be taught?
   Teachers should
   1) teach large numbers of phonic generalizations.
   2) teach a limited number of carefully selected phonic generalizations.
   3) teach phonic generalizations at all grade levels.
   4) encourage students to point out exceptions to phonic generalizations.

9. Which is a strategy for understanding word elements?
   1) phonetic analysis
   2) semantic mapping
   3) structural analysis
   4) syntactic analysis

10. Which word illustrates the soft sound of c?
    1) centimeter
    2) chair
    3) considerate
    4) match

11. Why is semantic mapping an effective strategy to activate and develop prior knowledge?
    It helps students to
    1) improve word recognition.
    2) become independent readers.
    3) visualize conceptual relationships.
    4) learn the dictionary definition of words.

12. Which teaching practice would best help students to develop their vocabulary and improve their reading comprehension?
    The teacher
    1) places emphasis on the use of the dictionary.
    2) places stress on memorizing new vocabulary terms.
    3) has students write new vocabulary terms in their notebooks.
    4) works with students on using their prior knowledge.

13. Which best describes metacognitive ability?
    The ability of students to
    1) identify stated and implied main ideas
    2) think clearly in order to interpret an author’s message
    3) be aware of and control their own thinking during reading and writing
    4) interpret an author’s message based on their individual background and experiences

14. Which teacher behavior models a strategy for comprehension?
    The teacher
    1) posts a list of strategies.
    2) pauses after each sentence.
    3) spells new words aloud.
    4) thinks aloud after sentences are read.
15. Which best defines aesthetic reading?
   Aesthetic reading refers to reading
   1) a story to understand its narrative structure.
   2) a text for discussion in small groups.
   3) to monitor one’s comprehension strategies.
   4) a text to experience, think, and feel during the reading.

16. Which best defines genre?
   1) classifications of stories by authors
   2) descriptions of actions by writers
   3) different types and categories of literature
   4) children’s literature organized by time period

17. What can a teacher determine by using retellings with beginning readers?
   The beginning readers’
   1) ability to decode unknown words
   2) progress in learning to construct meaning
   3) ability to break words into phonemes
   4) frequency of self-correction of miscues

18. Which is the most important characteristic of guided reading?
   1) Each student silently skims the text before beginning oral reading.
   2) Students who have read the same book get together to discuss their reactions to the book.
   3) The teacher questions, prompts, or helps students to formulate questions before silent reading.
   4) The teacher masks and frames a particular word or a part of a word during repeated readings of a book.

19. As students in the third grade read, the teacher wants them to engage in a writing activity to help them construct their own meanings, reflect and ask questions, and develop fluency and confidence in their writing. Which writing activity would best serve this purpose?
   1) diary
   2) free writing
   3) learning log
   4) response journal

20. Which statement best describes an interactive writing activity?
   1) Students are given a regular, fixed time for writing silently about self-selected topics.
   2) Students dictate narrative material as their teacher writes what they say.
   3) Students and their teacher jointly compose a text, sharing the pen as the text is written word by word.
   4) Students and their teacher interact through writing as they respond to literature.

21. What is a literature circle?
   1) a group of students discussing a piece of literature
   2) students performing a work of literature from beginning to end
   3) a class creating a semantic web prior to reading a piece of literature
   4) a class reading and retelling a chapter of a book

22. Which guideline should the teacher consider when planning independent reading and writing?
   1) Wait until children demonstrate an ability to work independently before beginning the program.
   2) Wait until children gain proficiency in reading and writing before beginning the program.
   3) Require students to share their work on a regular basis.
   4) Have designated periods of time for independent reading and writing.
23. Which is an advantage of using curriculum integration?
   1) It follows the linear nature of oral and written language development.
   2) It allows for breadth rather than depth in learning.
   3) It fosters the learning of related concepts.
   4) It encourages more knowledge acquisition due to extended time for activities.

24. A first-grade teacher plans to teach a lesson that would introduce children to the four seasons of the year. Which book would best serve this purpose?
   1) *In the Small, Small Pond*, by Denise Fleming
   2) *Owl Moon*, by Jane Yolen
   3) *The First Strawberries*, by Joseph Bruchac
   4) *Tar Beach*, by Faith Ringgold

25. A teacher is designing a thematic unit that focuses on helping students understand and explore the complexities of racism and prejudice. Which book would best serve this purpose?
   1) *Hatchet*, by Gary Paulsen
   2) *My Name is Maria Isabel*, by Alma Flor Ada
   3) *The Giver*, by Lois Lowry
   4) *Maniac Magee*, by Jerry Spinelli

26. Which strategy would provide students with the opportunity to access background knowledge, generate questions before reading, take notes and summarize, and prepare for response to the reading?
   1) cloze procedure
   2) K-W-L
   3) retelling
   4) story grammar

27. Which method would be best to use to gain information about a student’s oral reading level?
   1) conference
   2) running record
   3) literature discussion
   4) standardized test

28. What does an informal reading inventory (IRI) contain?
   1) a number of statements that students respond to during interviews
   2) a series of text passages organized in increasing difficulty
   3) a sampling of students’ work over a period of time
   4) a series of checklists to assess language qualities and traits

29. Which assessment tool compares the reading abilities of students with other students across the country?
   1) informal assessment
   2) norm-referenced assessment
   3) portfolio assessment
   4) teacher-made assessment

30. Which technique is typically associated with authentic assessment?
   1) cloze procedure
   2) informal reading inventory (IRI)
   3) portfolio
   4) standardized test
1. (IA1)
   1) Schema is not a teaching strategy.
   2) Schema is not a modeling process.
   3) Schema is not a method of organizing an assessment program.
   *4) Schema is a mental structure within an individual that provides the means for organizing life experiences into acquired knowledge.

2. (ID)
   *1) Knowledge of inventive spelling provides teachers with valuable information about children’s writing development. This knowledge also helps teachers understand children’s awareness of letter-sound associations.
   2) Inventive spelling is a developmental stage in learning to write, it is not related to classroom research.
   3) Inventive spelling is a well-documented developmental process in learning to write and is not a trend.
   4) Patterned word recognition does not address the importance of understanding students’ inventive spelling.

3. (IF)
   *1) Learning to read and write are processes facilitated by the integration of all of the language arts. Children learning English as a second language should be immersed in reading and writing activities as soon as they begin school.
   2) Waiting for a survival vocabulary to develop will unnecessarily slow second language learning.
   3) Children’s listening and speaking ability will grow more rapidly when they are simultaneously exposed to reading and writing.
   4) Reading and writing instruction should not be delayed until after students have developed a 200–300 word listening/speaking vocabulary.

4. (IIA)
   *1) “Clk” is correct. An emergent writer first focuses on consonant sounds in a word and does not typically represent vowel sounds in a word.
   2) “Cluk” is not correct. See 1).
   3) “Coc” is not correct. See 1).
   4) “Cok” is not correct. See 1).

5. (IIB)
   1) Following instructions or directions has no relationship to the term directionality.
   *2) Directionality is the ability to follow the way print is arranged on a page, top to bottom, left to right.
   3) Directionality does not refer to the case of letters.
   4) Directionality has no connection to the sequencing of sounds, it relates to the sequencing of print.
6. (IIE)
1) Phonic generalizations are not needed when using a dictionary. Dictionaries provide users with definitions and phonetic pronunciation of words.

*2) Phonic generalizations are used in learning to: pronounce words when reading; help students to identify words they cannot read; produce an approximation of a difficult word which students can then self-correct if the word is already in their speaking/listening vocabulary.

3) English has many irregularities in phoneme-grapheme correspondence.

4) Phonic generalizations are not used to develop memory skills.

7. (IIIA2)
1) Since jumped does not look like huddled, the student is not relying on the graphic cuing system.

2) Orthographic refers to the written spelling system. The miscue, jumped, reflects little relationship to the word huddle.

3) Since jumped has little sound relationship to huddled, the student is not relying on the phonic cuing system.

*4) The student uses syntactic knowledge to produce themiscue. The student has substituted a verb for a verb. This miscue, jumped, fits grammatically in the sentence and sounds as if it could be the correct reading for huddled.

8. (IIIA1)
1) Clymer points out that many phonic generalizations are inconsistent and not useful.

*2) Clymer advocates teaching only the few phonic generalizations that are consistent and useful.

3) Clymer does not advocate teaching phonics at all grade levels.

4) Clymer advocates teaching the few phonic generalizations that are consistent rather than those that have exceptions.

9. (IIIA3)
1) Phonetic analysis refers to identifying words by their sounds. Phonetic analysis does not help readers understand word elements.

2) Semantic mapping is a visual display of the relationship among concepts. It is not used to understand elements within words.

*3) Structural analysis helps readers understand word parts that convey meaning, such as the s in boys and the ed in looked.

4) Syntactic analysis refers to an analysis of how words are ordered in sentences.

10. (IIIA1)
*1) Centimeter is correct because the soft c sound is heard in this word, and this is similar to other soft c sounds such as city, cell, civil, and cycle.

2) Chair is incorrect because the sound of c in chair is part of the digraph ch. Digraphs are two letters forming a single sound. Other examples of words with the ch digraph are chin, chap, catch, and chow.

3) Considerate is incorrect because the c in considerate represents the hard sound of c, and this is similar to words with other hard sounds of c such as cap, cop, confer, and current.

4) Match is incorrect because the c in match is part of the digraph ch. See 2).

11. (IIID)
1) Semantic mapping is not used for word recognition.

2) Since the purpose of a semantic map is to visually represent concepts, semantic mapping has no direct connection to becoming an independent reader.

*3) Semantic mapping provides a visual display of the relationship among concepts and helps readers understand how words they know can be used in new contexts.

4) A semantic map graphically displays vocabulary and does not usually include or stress a dictionary definition of words.

*correct answer
12. (IVA1a)
1) An emphasis on dictionary usage would not improve comprehension because dictionary definitions lack social context and often do not lead to a clear understanding of the way words are used in context.
2) Memorization of new vocabulary items has limited value because only a small number of words would be successfully remembered. Moreover, to know words well, students need to experience them in a variety of written contexts.
3) Writing vocabulary in a notebook is a mechanical task and does not focus on the development of meaning.
4) Prior knowledge is the foundation for all vocabulary learning and comprehension. Students must relate prior knowledge to the process of reading in order to understand vocabulary and comprehend text.

13. (IVA1d)
1) Metacognitive ability means knowing about and regulating thinking processes. Students may be able to identify stated and implied ideas but not be aware of how they do it.
2) Clear thinking is important to reading, but it is not metacognitive.
3) Metacognitive ability involves self-awareness and regulation of the reading process. Readers and writers are metacognitive when they use their awareness of the reading process to select and employ particular reading and writing strategies.
4) Interpreting an author’s message based on background experience is not metacognitive since students may not be aware of how they made the interpretation.

14. (IVA3c)
1) Since posting a list of strategies does not show how to use the strategies, modeling has not occurred.
2) Pausing between sentences is not a strategy for developing comprehension.
3) Spelling new words is not a strategy for developing comprehension.
4) Thinking aloud after sentences are read is an effective strategy for modeling comprehension processes.

15. (IVA1e)
1) Although an understanding of narrative structure is important for comprehension of story material, it is not aesthetic reading.
2) Discussing a text in small groups is not a part of the definition of aesthetic reading.
3) Self-monitoring behaviors are critical to metacognitive processes, but they are not aesthetic reading.
4) Aesthetic reading refers to experiencing, thinking, and feeling while reading.

16. (IVA2b)
1) This does not define genre.
2) See 1).
3) Genre refers to types and categories of literature such as fiction, nonfiction, biography, mystery, and science fiction.
4) See 1).

17. (IVB2)
1) Oral reading can be effectively used to learn about decoding, but not retellings.
2) The goal of reading is to construct meaning from print. Retellings display and provide useful information about the students’ understanding of what they have read.
3) Retellings do not relate to assessing phonemic awareness (distinguishing phonemes in a given word).
4) Self-corrections occur while reading a text. Retellings are completed after reading. Miscues give teachers information about children’s oral reading processes, but retellings provide information about their comprehension.

*Correct answer
18. (IVB3b)
1) In guided reading, the teacher helps students with the silent reading process. Teacher guidance is missing from this response.
2) This is a description of literature circles and teacher guidance is missing from this response.
3) Guided reading occurs in the presence of a teacher. Teachers help students before silent reading by questioning and prompting them about anticipated text content.
4) This teaching strategy helps students with prediction and word identification. It is not guided reading.

19. (VF)
1) Although it will add to fluency and confidence in writing, diary writing does not require students to read, reflect, or question what they have read.
2) Free writing is a teaching strategy for developing writing fluency, but it does not require students to read, reflect, or question what they have read.
3) A learning log is a summary of what a student has learned. A log does not require students to read. A log can be used, for example, to record a learning activity such as a science experiment.
4) A response journal requires students to read, write a personal response, reflect, and question what they have read. Response journals help students build fluency and confidence in their writing.

20. (VIA2)
1) This is not interactive writing. Interactive writing involves teacher modeling and guidance as a text is composed with children. Fixed time for writing is a valuable part of a balanced literacy program, but it is not interactive writing.
2) This is similar to the language experience approach, which is a valuable instructional strategy for helping children develop as readers and writers. But it is not interactive writing.
3) The key is taken directly from the textbooks. Tompkins writes, “Students and the teacher create a message and ‘share the pen’ as they write it on chart paper in interactive writing.” (Tompkins, p. 478). Reutzel says, “The teacher and children share the pen as a message is written word by word.” (Reutzel, p. 316)
4) Interactive writing does not require responses to literature. Using writing to respond to literature is a good instructional strategy, but it is not interactive writing.

21. (VIA4b)
1) A literature circle is a group of students discussing a piece of literature. The students sit in a circle and share and discuss their responses to a piece of literature that has been read by all the group members.
2) Dramatic performance of literature is not a literature circle.
3) Creating a semantic web is not a literature circle.
4) Reading and retelling is not a literature circle.

22. (VIB5)
1) Waiting for children to demonstrate independent work skills is not an effective guideline. The most effective way for children to learn independent work skills is through guided practice reading and writing.
2) Proficiency in reading and writing is promoted by engaging in independent reading and writing; postponing these activities may postpone proficiency.
3) While students can profit from sharing their work, it is never desirable for teachers to require sharing. This could defeat the purpose of establishing independent reading and writing.
4) Designated time periods are essential for establishing and maintaining independent reading and writing.

* correct answer
23. (VIIB7)
1) Oral and written language learning is dynamic and interactive, not linear.
2) Curriculum integration allows for both breadth and depth of learning.
3) Curriculum integration allows key concepts to be studied from the vantage point of different subject areas. Children learn key concepts and how the concepts relate to other concepts through authentic literacy activities.
4) Although scheduling of the elementary subjects changes because of curriculum integration, the overall allocation of time remains the same.

24. (VIC1)
1) In the Small, Small Pond is an illustrated story about the environment of a pond over the four seasons of the year.
2) Owl Moon is a story about a father and daughter who go owling in the midst of winter. Only winter is mentioned.
3) The First Strawberries is a Native American folktale about a husband and wife. It does not present all four seasons.
4) Tar Beach is a story about a young girl who dreams of flying over New York City during a summer evening. Only summer is mentioned.

25. (VIC1)
1) Hatchet is about a boy’s survival in the wilderness after the single engine plane he was flying crashed. It is not about racism and prejudice.
2) My Name is Maria Isabel is about a young girl who is forced to be called “Mary” by her teacher because there are two other Marias in the child’s class. The book touches upon the importance of heritage and sense of self. It is not about racism and prejudice.
3) The Giver takes place in the future and describes a society that lives in a controlled environment and embraces conformity. It is not about racism and prejudice.
4) Maniac Magee is an excellent book choice for a unit on racism and prejudice. The book is about a boy who is orphaned and White and who faces prejudice while living with a Black family.

26. (VIIB3d)
1) The cloze procedure requires students to fill in words that have been systematically deleted from a reading selection.
2) The K-W-L study method includes three steps that provide the student with the opportunity to complete all the processes mentioned in the question. K asks the students to question what they already know about a topic; W requires that they must generate ideas for what they want to learn; and L indicates that they review and summarize what they have learned.
3) Retelling requires a student to read and then recall what was read.
4) A story grammar is a structure for a story including such elements as plot, character, and setting.

27. (VIIB2)
1) A teacher-student conference is helpful for learning about a student’s interests, literacy history, book choices, etc. It is not the best method to gain information about a student’s oral reading level.
2) A running record is an assessment tool for learning about a student’s oral reading level. It requires the student to orally read from the classroom reading material as the teacher carefully observes.
3) A literature discussion addresses a student’s response to reading. It does not provide information about a student’s oral reading level.
4) A standardized test will reveal how a student performs in relation to other students of similar age or grade. A standardized test is not useful for providing information about oral reading level.
28. (VIIB3)
1) Interviews are not part of an IRI.

2) An IRI consists of a series of graded passages of increasing difficulty that students read orally and silently.

3) A sampling of students’ work over time is not part of an IRI.

4) An IRI does not include a series of checklists that assess language qualities and traits. Some IRIs do include checklists to assess oral and silent reading behaviors.

29. (VIIB6)
1) Informal assessment, such as an IRI, does not provide normative data for the purpose of making comparisons.

2) Norm-referenced assessment compares the abilities (for example, reading) of students with other national samples.

3) Portfolio assessment is an individualized assessment tool and does not provide comparison information to other students.

4) Teacher-made assessment provides useful information about student performance on classroom literacy activities. However, this information cannot be used to make comparisons with students in other classrooms throughout the country.

30. (VIIC)
1) The cloze procedure, replacing words that have been deleted, provides teachers with a quick and limited view of reading abilities. It is not associated with authentic assessment.

2) An IRI, which consists of a series of graded passages of increasing difficulty, is not associated with authentic assessment.

3) Portfolios are associated with authentic assessment because they contain actual classroom material and tasks completed by students. A literacy portfolio might contain a list of books which have been read, an audiotape of a retelling, a written response to a book, photographs of books projects, etc.

4) A standardized test is administered to a group for the purposes of measuring achievement and comparing students to national samples. It is not associated with authentic assessment.
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On the day of your exam, remember to:

- dress comfortably: the computer will not mind that you’re wearing your favorite relaxation outfit
- arrive at the test site rested and prepared to concentrate for an extended period
- allow sufficient time to travel, park, and locate the test center
- be prepared for possible variations in temperature at the test center due to weather changes or energy conservation measures
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Student behavior is monitored during and after the exam. Electronic measures are used to monitor the security of test items and scan for illegal use of intellectual property. This monitoring includes surveillance of Internet chat rooms, websites, and other public forums.

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A committee of teaching faculty and practicing professionals determines the learning outcomes to be tested on each exam. Excelsior College Center for Educational Measurement staff oversee the technical aspects of test construction in accordance with current professional standards. To promote fairness in testing, we take special care to ensure that the language used in the exams and related materials is consistent, professional, and user friendly. Editorial staff perform systematic quantitative and qualitative reviews to ensure accuracy, clarity, and compliance with conventions of bias-free language usage.

Excelsior College, the test developer, recommends granting six (6) semester hours of upper-level undergraduate credit to students who receive a letter grade of C or higher on this examination. Other colleges and universities also recognize this exam as a basis for granting credit or advanced standing. Individual institutions set their own policies for the amount of credit awarded and the minimum acceptable score.

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