The *Praxis*® Study Companion

Reading Specialist

5302

Welcome to the *Praxis*® Study Companion

Prepare to Show What You Know

You have been working to acquire the knowledge and skills you need for your teaching career. Now you are ready to demonstrate your abilities by taking a *Praxis*® test.

Using the *Praxis*® *Study Companion* is a smart way to prepare for the test so you can do your best on test day. This guide can help keep you on track and make the most efficient use of your study time.

The Study Companion contains practical information and helpful tools, including:

- An overview of the *Praxis* tests
- Specific information on the *Praxis* test you are taking
- A template study plan
- Study topics
- Practice questions and explanations of correct answers
- Test-taking tips and strategies
- Frequently asked questions
- Links to more detailed information

So where should you start? Begin by reviewing this guide in its entirety and note those sections that you need to revisit. Then you can create your own personalized study plan and schedule based on your individual needs and how much time you have before test day.

Keep in mind that study habits are individual. There are many different ways to successfully prepare for your test. Some people study better on their own, while others prefer a group dynamic. You may have more energy early in the day, but another test taker may concentrate better in the evening. So use this guide to develop the approach that works best for you.

Your teaching career begins with preparation. Good luck!

Know What to Expect

Which tests should I take?

Each state or agency that uses the *Praxis* tests sets its own requirements for which test or tests you must take for the teaching area you wish to pursue.

Before you register for a test, confirm your state or agency's testing requirements at **www.ets.org/praxis/states**.

How are the *Praxis* tests given?

Praxis tests are given on computer. Other formats are available for test takers approved for accommodations (see page 35).

What should I expect when taking the test on computer?

When taking the test on computer, you can expect to be asked to provide proper identification at the test center. Once admitted, you will be given the opportunity to learn how the computer interface works (how to answer questions, how to skip questions, how to go back to questions you skipped, etc.) before the testing time begins. Watch the **What to Expect on Test Day** video to see what the experience is like.

Where and when are the *Praxis* tests offered?

You can select the test center that is most convenient for you. The *Praxis* tests are administered through an international network of test centers, which includes Prometric® Testing Centers, some universities, and other locations throughout the world.

Testing schedules may differ, so see the *Praxis* web site for more detailed test registration information at **www. ets.org/praxis/register**.

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The Praxis® Study Companion guides you through the steps to success

1. Learn About Your Test

Learn about the specific test you will be taking

Reading Specialist (5302)

Test at a Glance	
Test Name	Reading Specialist
Test Code	5302
Time	150 minutes
Number of Questions	95 selected-response questions; 2 constructed-response questions
Format	The selected-response questions account for approximately 75% of the total test score. The constructed-response questions account for about 25% of the score.
Test Delivery	Computer delivered

Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of Examination
I. Curriculum and Instruction	47	37%
II. Assessment	29	23%
III. Professional Leadership and Specialized Roles	19	15%
IV. Application	2	25%

About This Test

The Reading Specialist test is intended primarily for persons who have advanced academic preparation and/or who are being considered for supervisory or instructional positions related to the teaching of reading instruction in grades K–12. The test is most appropriate for candidates with advanced preparation (i.e., those with a master's degree or course work comparable to the training needed for a master's degree) who expect to have specialized responsibilities related to the teaching of reading at any level from kindergarten through twelfth grade. It also is appropriate for individuals who wish to be considered for supervisory or instructional positions related to the teaching of reading—those seeking positions as reading clinicians, consultants, supervisors, specialists, coaches, coordinators, or resource persons and thus intending to be responsible for more than the teaching of developmental reading in a regular classroom setting.

The content of the test is based largely on the 2017 Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals created by the International Literacy Association. This test consists of 95 selected-response questions and 2 constructed-response questions, one of which, is a case study. The test may contain some questions that will not count toward your score.

Content Topics

This list details the science topics that may be included on the test. All test questions will cover one more of these topics.

Interspersed throughout the study topics are **discussion areas**, presented as open-ended questions or statements. These discussion areas are intended to help test your knowledge of fundamental concepts and your ability to apply those concepts to situations in the classroom or the real world. Most of the areas require you to combine several pieces of knowledge to formulate an integrated understanding and response. If you spend time on these areas, you will gain increased understanding and facility with the subject matter covered on the test. You may want to discuss these areas and your answers with a teacher or mentor.

Note that this study companion **does NOT provide answers for the discussion area questions**, but thinking about the answers to them will help improve your understanding of fundamental concepts and will probably help you answer a broad range of questions on the test.

I. Curriculum and Instruction

A. Foundations and Curriculum Design

1. Is familiar with factors that affect literacy development (e.g., medical, environmental, cultural, linguistic, social, and emotional)
2. Understands the developmental continuum of oral language, phonological awareness (including phonemic awareness), concepts of print, alphabetic principle, decoding skills, printed-word recognition, spelling, reading fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and written expression
3. Knows characteristics of diverse literacy profiles (e.g., students with dyslexia, gifted and talented, English learners)
4. Is familiar with design, implementation, and evaluation of the literacy curriculum materials and the role of standards for all students

B. Instructional Design

1. Is familiar with ways to support classroom teachers and education support personnel to implement research-based instructional approaches for all students

2. Is familiar with aspects of cognition and behavior in literacy development, including attention, automaticity, verbal memory, processing speed, and graphomotor control and their effects on literacy development
3. Is familiar with methods to create a literacy-rich environment (engaging classroom library, word wall, authentic children's work, digital technology, reading nooks) that meet the specific needs, interests, and abilities of diverse learners
4. Knows strategies that foster students' engagement, increase desire to read, and promote growth as readers
5. Knows strategies to support the language needs of English learners
6. Understands how to individualize instructional materials and approaches to meet the needs of students who need additional support with literacy skills

C. Implementation

1. Is familiar with instructional approaches that support the development of reading strategies required for different types and forms of texts (i.e., digital and print, disciplinary literacy)
2. Understands research-supported instructional approaches and interventions for concepts of print
3. Understands research-supported instructional approaches and interventions for phonological (including phonemic) awareness
4. Understands research-supported instructional approaches and interventions for alphabetic principle, phonics, high-frequency words, decoding, and encoding
5. Understands research-supported instructional approaches and interventions for morphological analysis (e.g., affixes, roots, and base words)
6. Understands research-supported instructional approaches and interventions for vocabulary
7. Understands research-supported instructional approaches and interventions for fluency
8. Understands research-supported instructional approaches and interventions for listening and reading comprehension (e.g., text dependent questioning, close reading)
9. Understands research-supported instructional approaches and interventions for use of writing mechanics and written expression

Discussion areas: Curriculum and Instruction

- What is the difference between phonics and phonological awareness?

- In what ways do students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds affect comprehension?

- What is the difference between fluency and prosody?

- What is the relationship between fluency and comprehension?

- What is the relationship between learning to read and learning to write?

II. Assessment

A. Types and Purposes of Assessment

1. Understands the function and purpose of formal and informal assessments, including screening measures, to determine the literacy needs of the student (i.e., diagnostic, progress monitoring, and measuring outcomes)
2. Knows basic technical vocabulary associated with assessments (e.g., criterion-referenced, norm-referenced, reliability, validity, fairness, and equity)
3. Understands how to select, administer, and interpret appropriate assessments for students, especially for those who need additional literacy support

B. Interprets Data for Instruction

1. Understands how to analyze individual reader's performance using multiple data sources and plan instruction and intervention
2. Understands how to analyze and use assessment data to examine the effectiveness of specific intervention practices and students' responses to instruction
3. Knows ways to support teachers in analyzing and using individual, classroom, grade-level, and school wide assessment data to make instructional and grouping decisions
4. Understands how to analyze and present assessment data according to the needs of students, parents, and school members
5. Knows how to promote student reflection and self-efficacy through goal setting

Discussion areas: Assessment

- What is the purpose of formal and nonformal assessments?

- What is the function of informal assessment?

- For what purpose are norm-referenced assessments used?

- Based on assessment data, what are some ways teachers can modify instruction for students with diverse learning profiles?

- How can the reading specialist promote student reflection and self-efficacy?

III. Professional Leadership and Specialized Roles

A. Diverse Learners

1. Is familiar with the relationship between first- and second-language acquisition and literacy development and ways to support educators in meeting the unique needs of English learners
2. Knows how to refine educator practice in providing differentiated instruction for all students
3. Knows ways to promote family and community engagement to support literacy development

B. Professional Development and Leadership

1. Understands how to model and support teachers in using data to inform practices to meet the diverse literacy needs of students
2. Is familiar with effective collaboration and conflict resolution strategies that facilitate communication and literacy improvement
3. Knows methods to collaborate in planning and facilitating professional learning for individuals and groups of teachers using data to enhance the quality of literacy instruction. This may include working individually with teachers (e.g., modeling, co-planning, co-teaching, and observing) or with groups (e.g., teacher workshops, group meetings, and online learning)
4. Is familiar with how to provide evidence that supports effective communication and collaboration among stakeholders, including parents and guardians, teachers, administrators, policymakers, and community members

5. Knows methods to collaborate with leadership teams in order to support multi-tiered systems of support and advocate for students who are at risk for not reading and writing at grade level

Discussion areas: Professional Leadership and Specialized Roles

- What is the relationship between first- and second-language acquisition and literacy development?

- Which is one aspect of professional development that contributes to an effective reading program?

- How does a reading specialist facilitate professional learning for teachers?

- What are effective ways to communicate students' reading progress to stakeholders (i.e., parents and administration)?

- What are a few of the universal strategies to promote family engagement to improve literacy skills?

IV. Application (Constructed-Response)

A. Professional Leadership

1. Will apply knowledge of professional learning and leadership to prepare an organized written response to a topic related to the development of student literacy.

B. Analysis of Individual Student Case Study

1. Will apply knowledge of reading assessment and instruction to prepare an organized written response to a case study of an elementary student.

2. Familiarize Yourself with Test Questions

Become comfortable with the types of questions you'll find on the Praxis *tests*

The *Praxis* assessments include a variety of question types: constructed response (for which you write a response of your own); selected response, for which you select one or more answers from a list of choices or make another kind of selection (e.g., by clicking on a sentence in a text or by clicking on part of a graphic); and numeric entry, for which you enter a numeric value in an answer field. You may be familiar with these question formats from taking other standardized tests. If not, familiarize yourself with them so you don't spend time during the test figuring out how to answer them.

Understanding Computer-Delivered Questions

Questions on computer-delivered tests are interactive in the sense that you answer by selecting an option or entering text on the screen. If you see a format you are not familiar with, read the directions carefully. The directions always give clear instructions on how you are expected to respond.

For most questions, you respond by clicking an oval to select a single answer from a list of answer choices.

However, interactive question types may also ask you to respond by:

- **Clicking more than one oval** to select answers from a list of choices.
- **Typing in an entry box.** When the answer is a number, you may be asked to enter a numerical answer. Some questions may have more than one place to enter a response.
- **Clicking check boxes.** You may be asked to click check boxes instead of an oval when more than one choice within a set of answers can be selected.
- **Clicking parts of a graphic.** In some questions, you will select your answers by clicking on a location (or locations) on a graphic such as a map or chart, as opposed to choosing your answer from a list.
- **Clicking on sentences.** In questions with reading passages, you may be asked to choose your answers by clicking on a sentence (or sentences) within the reading passage.
- **Dragging and dropping answer choices into targets on the screen.** You may be asked to select answers from a list of choices and drag your answers to the appropriate location in a table, paragraph of text or graphic.
- **Selecting answer choices from a drop-down menu.** You may be asked to choose answers by selecting choices from a drop-down menu (e.g., to complete a sentence).

Remember that with every question you will get clear instructions.

Perhaps the best way to understand computer-delivered questions is to view the <u>Computer-delivered Testing Demonstration</u> on the Praxis web site to learn how a computer-delivered test works and see examples of some types of questions you may encounter.

Understanding Selected-Response Questions

Many selected-response questions begin with the phrase "which of the following." Take a look at this example:

Which of the following is a flavor made from beans?

(A) Strawberry

(B) Cherry

(C) Vanilla

(D) Mint

How would you answer this question?

All of the answer choices are flavors. Your job is to decide which of the flavors is the one made from beans.

Try following these steps to select the correct answer.

1) **Limit your answer to the choices given.** You may know that chocolate and coffee are also flavors made from beans, but they are not listed. Rather than thinking of other possible answers, focus only on the choices given ("which of the following").

2) **Eliminate incorrect answers.** You may know that strawberry and cherry flavors are made from fruit and that mint flavor is made from a plant. That leaves vanilla as the only possible answer.

3) **Verify your answer.** You can substitute "vanilla" for the phrase "which of the following" and turn the question into this statement: "Vanilla is a flavor made from beans." This will help you be sure that your answer is correct. If you're still uncertain, try substituting the other choices to see if they make sense. You may want to use this technique as you answer selected-response questions on the practice tests.

Try a more challenging example

The vanilla bean question is pretty straightforward, but you'll find that more challenging questions have a similar structure. For example:

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

(A) Literal and inferential

(B) Concrete and abstract

(C) Linear and recursive

(D) Main and subordinate

You'll notice that this example also contains the phrase "which of the following." This phrase helps you determine that your answer will be a "relationship of ideas" from the choices provided. You are supposed to find the choice that describes how entries, or ideas, in outlines are related.

Sometimes it helps to put the question in your own words. Here, you could paraphrase the question in this way: "How are outlines usually organized?" Since the ideas in outlines usually appear as main ideas and subordinate ideas, the answer is (D).

QUICK TIP: Don't be intimidated by words you may not understand. It might be easy to be thrown by words like "recursive" or "inferential." Read carefully to understand the question and look for an answer that fits. An outline is something you are probably familiar with and expect to teach to your students. So slow down, and use what you know.

Watch out for selected-response questions containing "NOT," "LEAST," and "EXCEPT"

This type of question asks you to select the choice that does not fit. You must be very careful because it is easy to forget that you are selecting the negative. This question type is used in situations in which there are several good solutions or ways to approach something, but also a clearly wrong way.

How to approach questions about graphs, tables, or reading passages

When answering questions about graphs, tables, or reading passages, provide only the information that the questions ask for. In the case of a map or graph, you might want to read the questions first, and then look at the map or graph. In the case of a long reading passage, you might want to go ahead and read the passage first, noting places you think are important, and then answer the questions. Again, the important thing is to be sure you answer the questions as they refer to the material presented. So read the questions carefully.

How to approach unfamiliar formats

New question formats are developed from time to time to find new ways of assessing knowledge. Tests may include audio and video components, such as a movie clip or animation, instead of a map or reading passage. Other tests may allow you to zoom in on details in a graphic or picture.

Tests may also include interactive questions. These questions take advantage of technology to assess knowledge and skills in ways that standard selected-response questions cannot. If you see a format you are not familiar with, **read the directions carefully**. The directions always give clear instructions on how you are expected to respond.

QUICK TIP: Don't make the questions more difficult than they are. Don't read for hidden meanings or tricks. There are no trick questions on *Praxis* tests. They are intended to be serious, straightforward tests of your knowledge.

Understanding Constructed-Response Questions

Constructed-response questions require you to demonstrate your knowledge in a subject area by creating your own response to particular topics. Essays and short-answer questions are types of constructed-response questions.

For example, an essay question might present you with a topic and ask you to discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the opinion stated. You must support your position with specific reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

Take a look at a few sample essay topics:

- "Celebrities have a tremendous influence on the young, and for that reason, they have a responsibility to act as role models."
- "We are constantly bombarded by advertisements—on television and radio, in newspapers and magazines, on highway signs, and the sides of buses. They have become too pervasive. It's time to put limits on advertising."
- "Advances in computer technology have made the classroom unnecessary, since students and teachers are able to communicate with one another from computer terminals at home or at work."

Keep these things in mind when you respond to a constructed-response question

1) **Answer the question accurately.** Analyze what each part of the question is asking you to do. If the question asks you to describe or discuss, you should provide more than just a list.

2) **Answer the question completely.** If a question asks you to do three distinct things in your response, you should cover all three things for the best score. Otherwise, no matter how well you write, you will not be awarded full credit.

3) **Answer the question that is asked.** Do not change the question or challenge the basis of the question. You will receive no credit or a low score if you answer another question or if you state, for example, that there is no possible answer.

4) **Give a thorough and detailed response.** You must demonstrate that you have a thorough understanding of the subject matter. However, your response should be straightforward and not filled with unnecessary information.

5) **Reread your response.** Check that you have written what you thought you wrote. Be sure not to leave sentences unfinished or omit clarifying information.

QUICK TIP: You may find that it helps to take notes on scratch paper so that you don't miss any details. Then you'll be sure to have all the information you need to answer the question.

For tests that have constructed-response questions, more detailed information can be found on page 23.

3. Practice with Sample Test Questions

Answer practice questions and find explanations for correct answers

Computer Delivery

This test is available via computer delivery. The following sample question provides a preview of an actual screen used in a computer-delivered test. For the purposes of this Study Companion, the sample questions are shown as they would appear in a paper-delivered test.

Sample Test Questions

The sample questions that follow illustrate the kinds of questions on the test. They are not, however, representative of the entire scope of the test in either content or difficulty. Answers with explanations follow the questions.

Directions: Each of the questions or statements below is followed by suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case.

1. A science teacher asks the school reading specialist for strategies to help students acquire content-area vocabulary and improve their comprehension of the science textbook. Which of the following strategies is most appropriate for the reading specialist to recommend for this goal?

   (A) Introducing key vocabulary terms in context before reading the text

   (B) Selecting words from the text and having students write down definitions from the glossary

   (C) Pretesting students on the vocabulary terms from the textbook

   (D) Comparing the dictionary definitions of the vocabulary terms with the definitions found in the textbook glossary

2. A reading specialist collects data at four-week intervals on several third-grade students. The data indicate that the students' accuracy, fluency, and comprehension are at an end-of-first-grade level.

   The reading specialist is most likely to recommend focused instruction in which of the following?

   (A) Developing a sight-word vocabulary

   (B) Rehearsing the 42 alphabet sounds

   (C) Reading a variety of texts

   (D) Applying word-analysis strategies

3. Which of the following best describes the concept of fairness in educational measurement?

   (A) The idea that test takers with equal proficiency in the construct being measured should have the same probability of answering a particular test question correctly

   (B) The idea that test results are consistent over time and across test questions

   (C) The idea that a test taker's performance should be assessed based on the constructs being measured and not on the test taker's group membership

   (D) The idea that a test should measure what it purports to measure

4. Students in elementary school often have a wide range of reading abilities. Which of the following approaches will best meet the needs of all students?

   (A) Establishing three ability-level groups for each subject

   (B) Using the same text for all students but modifying assignments

   (C) Asking the reading specialist to work with the reading group that has the lowest ability level

   (D) Using flexible grouping and a variety of materials at various reading levels

5. A mentor teacher notices that during English language arts instruction, a new teacher asks many recall questions related to a novel the class is reading. The mentor teacher plans to suggest a few higher-order thinking questions that would be appropriate. Which of the following questions best reflects how point of view can affect a story?

   (A) What would happen in the story if the antagonist were the main character?

   (B) Who are the memorable characters appearing in the first three chapters?

   (C) How successful was the protagonist in dealing with the problem in the story?

   (D) Why did the author choose the particular setting for the story instead of another place?

6. When a student who is reading aloud substitutes a word of similar meaning for a word that appears in print, the teacher's most appropriate response is most likely to

   (A) immediately ask the student to reread the word correctly

   (B) quietly and quickly correct the miscue by pronouncing the correct word aloud as soon as the student makes the mistake

   (C) stop the student immediately, write both words down, and have the student identify and read the word as it appears in the text

   (D) allow the student to continue reading, since occasional miscues are a normal aspect of reading

7. A student has a reading accuracy rate of 80%. Which of the following approaches will best develop the student's reading skills?

   (A) Reducing the student's reading level by one level to increase accuracy

   (B) Leaving the student at the same reading level because the score for reading accuracy is at a high level

   (C) Increasing the student's reading level by one level to increase the reading challenge

   (D) Leaving the student at the same reading level until the student increases accuracy

8. A reading specialist is collecting data on a kindergarten student's knowledge of phonemic awareness skills. The reading specialist asks the student, "Which word does not belong: 'plant,' 'play,' 'rain,' 'please'?" Which of the following phonemic awareness skills is the teacher assessing?

   (A) Deletion

   (B) Categorization

   (C) Substitution

   (D) Segmentation

9. A teacher assesses a student's oral language proficiency using the three specific indicators listed.

   1. The ability to give and keep eye contact

   2. The ability to begin conversations with adults

   3. The ability to wait attentively while an adult responds

   The teacher records the degree to which each indicator is met by the student and will use the data to monitor the student's progress over time. Which of the following evaluative forms is most appropriate to use to help meet the teacher's goal?

   (A) Rubric

   (B) Checklist

   (C) Rating scale

   (D) Narrative record

10. A fifth-grade teacher conducts a whole-class lesson on methods of citing textual evidence before students read a passage and write a response to it. The teacher explains that if students incorporate any evidence from the passage into their response, they should have a reason to do so.
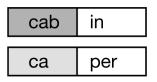
    Which of the following best identifies the primary rationale for a student to use a direct quotation when responding to the passage?

    (A) To add credibility and authority to the response

    (B) To focus on a specific source cited in the passage

    (C) To communicate an overview of the information in the passage

    (D) To provide supporting facts and details for a claim

11. Language-experience activities in kindergarten can best be used to benefit students' early literacy development by

(A) providing an authentic way to demonstrate word awareness in a meaningful context

(B) giving students opportunities to build alphabet-recognition skills

(C) demonstrating how to write in various genres

(D) providing a model of correct grammatical structures in written expression

Word in Text	Teacher's Recording of Student Responses (written phonetically)
bigger	bī jər
even	ĕv ĕn
recess	rĕk ēs
inside	ĭns ĭd
accident	ăk ĭd ĕnt
interrupt	ī tər ŭpt
skeleton	skē lĕt ȯn

12. A third-grade student makes the errors listed while orally reading a passage in a reading anthology. Based on the information, on which of the following word-analysis skills should the teacher focus instruction to best meet the student's needs?

(A) Consonant blends

(B) Phonemic awareness

(C) Syllabication

(D) R-controlled vowels

cab	in
ca	per

13. A reading teacher uses the preceding letter boxes as a visual aid to help students understand the difference between closed and open syllable types. Which of the following will best ensure that the students learn the distinction?

(A) Changing the color coding of the letter boxes to colors that students agree to associate with closed and open

(B) Providing additional word pairs such as "level/legal" and "visit/vital" for the students to contrast

(C) Including words starting with the /a/ sound found in words such as "away" and "against"

(D) Having students examine words that fit into three or more boxes and contain a different syllable type

14. During a fifth-grade literature circle unit, students in each circle choose a novel to study and work together to complete various activities. Which of the following activities best empowers students to demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the novel they read?

(A) Taking a fill-in-the-blank or cloze test created by the publisher of the novel they selected

(B) Keeping a personal reflection journal of reading performance while reading their novel

(C) Designing art for a new cover for their novel to display in the library and entice others to read it

(D) Creating a Web site with multiple organized sections to house information about each circle's novel

15. After a student completes a reading fluency assessment, the teacher notes that the student can read the passage correctly, without hesitation, and at an appropriate pace. However, the student does not demonstrate expression while reading. The student needs further instruction primarily in

    (A) prosody
    (B) speed
    (C) automaticity
    (D) decoding

16. A group of teachers are compiling a bank of strategies that struggling students can use to develop their reading comprehension skills. Which of the following is the best student strategy to add to the bank?

    (A) Practicing silent reading for a prescribed length of time each day
    (B) Performing frequent oral reading fluency exercises with the class
    (C) Listening to a text while reading it and forming mental models
    (D) Studying lists of content-specific vocabulary and completing word maps

17. Which **THREE** of the following are the most important factors for a teacher to consider when planning differentiated instruction to maximize learning for all students in a literacy class?

    (A) Assessing students' mastery and application of a wide range of literacy skills
    (B) Using a variety of evidence-based instructional approaches to learning
    (C) Planning fast-paced instruction to spark and maintain student interest
    (D) Employing flexible grouping and regrouping practices
    (E) Adapting assignments to meet the needs of a diverse student population

18. Mr. Santos, a fifth-grade teacher, meets with the building reading specialist to share concerns about a paraprofessional assigned in a language arts class. Mr. Santos describes the paraprofessional, Ms. Stanley, as hovering over the four students who have Individualized Education Programs, watching their work, and constantly correcting them. He is concerned that while he is implementing a guided instructional approach to probe students' thinking with questions that require literary analysis, the paraprofessional is interfering with the students' learning processes of response, review, reflection, and adjustment. Which of the following instructional approaches best fits the needs of the paraprofessional as the reading specialist plans for her professional development?

    (A) Guided reading
    (B) Gradual release of responsibility
    (C) Differentiated instruction
    (D) Project-based learning

19. Which of the following is the most significant impact that early attainment of decoding skills has on a student's literacy development?

    (A) Enhancing a student's motivation to read curriculum-based texts during times allotted to independent reading
    (B) Enabling a student to organize cooperative reading activities involving texts on topics of shared interest
    (C) Serving as a strong predictor of a student's later success in meeting the level of proficient in reading comprehension
    (D) Allowing a student to process complex texts at the same reading rate as is used to process texts at more accessible levels

20. At the beginning of a school year, a group of classroom teachers are looking over assessment data from the previous year with the reading specialist. They notice that some students in each class scored lower than expected. Which of the following actions will best help the students during the upcoming school year?

    (A) Placing similar-scoring students in skill groups for remediation

    (B) Retaining students who historically score low on assessments

    (C) Tutoring students in each area of need individually

    (D) Switching low-ability students to classrooms with higher-performing teachers

21. A third-grade teacher asks a reading specialist for help grouping students for guided reading. The teacher and reading specialist discuss data from curriculum-based reading assessments, standardized reading scores from an online reading program, and a required student interest survey. Which type of assessment will be most effective to use to provide data for grouping students for guided reading?

    (A) Interim assessment, such as measuring students' readiness for a future test

    (B) Interim assessment, such as measuring students' self-evaluation skills

    (C) Summative assessment, such as measuring students' retention of content

    (D) Formative assessment, such as measuring students' word-reading accuracy

22. Members of the staff at an elementary school comprise a curriculum development team that is to conduct an in-depth analysis and revamping of the school's literacy program. During the planning and development phase of the project, which of the following is the best first step for the team to take?

    (A) Developing a multi-grade-level scope and sequence document and a curriculum map

    (B) Analyzing state and national standards to formulate a philosophy and rationale for a revised curriculum

    (C) Recruiting trainers and mentors responsible for professional development sessions using new curriculum materials

    (D) Reviewing local, state, and national test data and stakeholder survey results to guide the selection of a curriculum

23. Which of the following is the best way for a reading specialist who plans and facilitates professional learning sessions to collaborate with a group of teachers?

    (A) Selecting professional literature that teachers must read

    (B) Observing lessons and writing evaluations for teachers

    (C) Structuring meetings during which teachers focus on goals

    (D) Encouraging the principal to meet with teachers resistant to change

24. Of the following, which is the most effective way for a reading specialist to empower classroom teachers and educational support personnel to implement research-based instructional approaches?

    (A) Encouraging personnel to join the International Literacy Association

    (B) Providing coaching for staff members as the need arises

    (C) Observing staff as they locate resources on recommended practices

    (D) Testing students every two to four weeks to measure their progress

Answers to Sample Questions

1. The correct answer is (A). Although there is no single method for providing direct vocabulary instruction, teachers must help students improve their ability to construct word knowledge within a meaningful context and not just learn words in isolation. (B) is incorrect because selecting vocabulary from a text and writing definitions is not an effective method for learning meanings of unfamiliar words. (C) is incorrect because pretesting may provide the teacher with data to plan differentiated instruction, but it is not an instructional strategy for improving students' knowledge of vocabulary. (D) is incorrect because comparing definitions from two sources is not an appropriate method of meeting the students' content-area vocabulary needs.

2. The correct answer is (D). Poor accuracy indicates poor decoding or word-analysis strategies, and accurate decoding is what leads to fluency and comprehension. (A) is incorrect because students' vocabulary grows with exposure to various texts. (B) is incorrect because it can be inferred that the students have a grasp of most of the basic alphabet sounds. (C) is incorrect because a focus on comprehension would come after decoding and fluency are strengthened.

3. The correct answer is (C). "Fairness" is a technical term used in educational measurement that refers to the idea that construct-irrelevant, personal characteristics of a test taker (gender, ethnicity, religion, race, etc.) should have no appreciable effect on test results or the interpretation of test results. (A) is incorrect because the idea that test takers with equal proficiency in the construct being measured should have the same probability of answering a test question correctly refers to the absence of test bias. (B) is incorrect because the idea that test results are consistent over time and across test questions refers to reliability. (D) is incorrect because the idea that a test measures what it purports to measure refers to validity.

4. The correct answer is (D). Flexible grouping is a teaching strategy that allows for student placement in various groups based on factors such as skill need, interest, or personal choice. The flexible groups may change on a daily basis or may exist for several days or more. Using a variety of literary materials in different genres at various reading levels also addresses a wide range of reading abilities within a classroom. (A) is incorrect because establishing three static reading groups based on ability is not an effective organizational pattern for meeting the diverse and continually changing needs and interests of students. (B) is incorrect because students' independent, instructional, and frustration reading levels vary;

providing students with modified assignments using text at the same level for all students does not address their unique skill needs. (C) is incorrect because asking a reading specialist to work with the lowest-level reading group does not address the classroom-based instructional needs of all students.

5. The correct answer is (A). Asking what would happen if the antagonist in the story were the main character requires students to evaluate the character and his or her actions and infer how the story would be different if the antagonist were the main character. It requires students to consider how point of view affects a story and how knowing more about an antagonist can change a reader's opinion of the antagonist. (B) is incorrect because asking what the students remember about the events that occurred is a low-level question in terms of cognitive rigor. (C) is incorrect because asking how successfully the protagonist deals with the problem in the story is a low-level question in terms of cognitive rigor. (D) is incorrect because asking why the author chose a particular setting for action is a low-level question in terms of cognitive rigor.

6. The correct answer is (D). The most important consideration when analyzing a reader's oral reading miscues is whether or not the error makes sense, i.e., whether the error is semantically correct. A reader whose primary attention is on creating meaning from text reveals this focus while reading orally. In fact, the reader may not even be aware of the miscue if the meaning has not changed. (A), (B), and (C) are incorrect because they are not effective instructional practices.

7. The correct answer is (A). The student needs to go down a reading level because 80% accuracy is at the student's frustration level, indicating that the current reading level is too difficult for the student. (B) is incorrect because doing nothing would keep the student at frustration level and unable to learn new reading skills. (C) is incorrect because raising the student a level would only increase the frustration. (D) is incorrect because keeping the student at the same level would keep the student at frustration level and unable to learn new reading skills.

8. The correct answer is (B). In phoneme categorization, students must listen to four words and identify which one has a sound that is different from those of the other words. (A) is incorrect because phoneme deletion refers to a student's ability to recognize the word that remains when a phoneme is removed from another word. (C) is incorrect because in a phoneme substitution activity, a student must replace a phoneme in one word to form a new word. (D) is incorrect because the student has not been asked to perform phoneme segmentation, which is breaking the word into its individual sounds.

9. The correct answer is (C). A rating scale enables a teacher to determine specific criteria to observe for assessment and then to grade the presence or absence of the criteria by varying degrees for comparison purposes over time. (A) is incorrect because a rubric is more often used for a general assessment of language or for larger tasks that are then graded in smaller components. A rubric is also not best suited for comparison purposes of discrete indicators over time. (B) is incorrect because a checklist, which is similar to a rating scale, does not indicate the presence of varying degrees of chosen indicators. (D) is incorrect because a narrative record is not the best tool to use for the purposes indicated. A narrative record is better suited for a more detailed analysis of a student's overall language performance and for providing ancillary details, such as the social-cultural context of learning.

10. The correct answer is (A). Directly quoting from an author's text indicates to a reader that the author's words are powerful or highly informative. By quoting an author, a student indicates that he or she believes that the author writes from a perspective of high authority and that the author's reputation gives credibility to the supporting evidence in the student's written response. (B) is incorrect because focusing on a specific idea from a text to support a student's response is a rationale for paraphrasing supporting evidence. (C) is incorrect because an overview of the passage is best communicated by a summary written in the student's own words. (D) is incorrect because support for an author's claim is best provided by citing additional sources.

11. The correct answer is (A). Through the use of language-experience charts, teachers demonstrate how speech can be written down in a meaningful way. Students observe the process and learn word awareness, spelling, and the conventions of written language in an authentic manner. (B) is incorrect because learning the names of letters in the alphabet is not the purpose of using the language-experience approach. (C) is incorrect because, although topics for language-experience activities may vary greatly, students are not learning specific characteristics of writing in different genres, and such an activity is not developmentally appropriate for kindergarten students. (D) is incorrect because the teacher provides a model of correct grammatical structures while recording students' speech, but such modeling is not the primary or best benefit of language-experience activities for developing kindergarten students' early literacy skills.

12. The correct answer is (C). The errors indicate that the student has difficulty applying syllabication rules to unknown words. The focus of further instruction should be helping the student decode multisyllabic words by learning ways to split a word into its syllables. Such ways include stopping between two middle consonant sounds, such as /g/ and /g/ in "bigger," and before a single middle consonant sound, such as /d/ in "accident." (A) and (D) are incorrect because the student did not make errors in reading words with consonant blends or r-controlled vowels. (B) is incorrect because the student understands that words are made up of individual sounds.

13. The correct answer is (B). The word pairs are designed to compare and contrast closed and open syllables. Students must examine many pairs of words to firm up their understanding of each syllable type. (A) is incorrect because there is no reason to change the color coding of the closed and open vowel sounds; this would not have a significant impact on the strategy the teacher is using. (C) is incorrect because the examples are outliers in which the /a/ makes the schwa sound /uh/ and represent a different syllable type. (D) is incorrect because the main point of the lesson is to compare closed and open syllables, not to recognize multiple syllable types.

14. The correct answer is (D). Creating a Web site with multiple sections requires the students to demonstrate in-depth knowledge about various story elements while showing organizational skills. These are higher-order processes, and they also give students the chance to engage in twenty-first-century learning. (A) is incorrect because such tests are often full of recall-type questions and do not require the students to show depth of thought or knowledge about a book. Projects in which students must synthesize learning into their own words provide a more rigorous avenue for demonstrating knowledge. (B) is incorrect because while the assessment described asks students to evaluate their own performance and participation, it does not require them to demonstrate knowledge of the book. (C) is incorrect because while creating cover art for a novel is an engaging and artistic endeavor, it does not show that students have developed cumulative knowledge of an entire literary work.

15. The correct answer is (A). Prosody is the ability to read with expression and appropriate tone. (B) is incorrect because the student is reading at an appropriate speed or pace. (C) is incorrect because the student is demonstrating the ability to read the given passage with automaticity. (D) is incorrect because the student reads without hesitation.

16. The correct answer is (C). The ability to listen to a text while reading it and form mental models or schema removes the effort involved in decoding and gives students the opportunity to analyze rich text. (A) is incorrect because while the act of practicing improves reading, it is often a difficult task for someone with poor comprehension. The mere act of trying to read without support does not ensure that the student will improve. (B) is incorrect because while the act of reading aloud frequently can improve one's oral reading fluency, it does not necessarily increase a student's comprehension of the text. Many students, especially adolescents, do not comprehend as well as they decode. Oral reading fluency assessments, as suggested by their title, are a better indicator of fluency than of comprehension. (D) is incorrect because while study of specialized vocabulary is an integral part of reading comprehension, students derive much more from studying words that occur frequently across many contexts.

17. The correct answers are (B), (D), and (E). The correct answer is (B). Using a variety of evidence-based instructional approaches to learning is correct because in providing differentiated instruction, it is important for a teacher to use multiple strategies that are selected to best meet specific needs. The correct answer is (D). Employing flexible grouping practices is correct because it is best practice for a teacher to use a combination of whole-class, small-group, and individual instruction when planning differentiated instruction. The correct answer is (E). Altering assignments to meet the needs of a diverse student population is correct because it is best practice for a teacher to adapt assignments that students should complete based on their learning needs.

18. The correct answer is (B). The method described by the teacher who expressed concern (guided instruction) is the second stage of gradual release, and the paraprofessional is directly interfering with this phase of instruction. (A) is incorrect because guided reading is a model that focuses on diagnosing reading needs to guide reading-level-based instruction. (C) is incorrect because differentiated instruction is an approach based on alternating instructional methods according to students' individual needs. (D) is incorrect because project-based learning (PBL) is an approach in which it is believed that students acquire a deeper knowledge through active exploration of real-world challenges and problems.

19. The correct answer is (C). Research has shown that a student who acquires good decoding skills early is much more likely to be successful in reading for understanding as he/she progresses through the grades. (A) is incorrect. Acquiring early mastery of decoding skills is important in creating a student's desire to engage in wide reading activities. However, choosing to read curriculum-based texts during periods of independent reading in the classroom is not as likely to be a motivator in wide-reading activities as choosing books of interest would be. (B) is incorrect. Acquiring early mastery of decoding skills may or may not be not directly related to a student being actively engaged in cooperative reading experiences that involve reading books on topics of common interest to students in the group. (D) is incorrect. Good readers change their rate of reading depending on factors related to the complexity of the text, purpose for reading, etc. Therefore, it is not correct to state that a student with good decoding skills will always read at a faster rate than a student with poor decoding abilities.

20. The correct answer is (A). After reviewing the data, teachers can adjust small-group instruction based on student need. (B) is incorrect because holding lower-scoring students back is not the only or best way to provide remediation. (C) is incorrect because individually tutoring students in each area is time-consuming and inefficient. (D) is incorrect because moving low-ability students to the classrooms of higher-performing teachers may not improve the students' skills if remediation is not provided.

21. The correct answer is (D). Formative assessments are used to guide reading instruction, and in this case, it is the only option that would be used to group children for guided reading. (A) is incorrect because interim assessments would be used once grouping is established and the learning process is checked for ongoing instruction. It is not a starting point. (B) is incorrect because interim assessments would be used once grouping is established and the learning process is checked for ongoing instruction. It is not a starting point. (C) is incorrect because summative assessments are not intended to establish guided reading groups; they are end-point assessments to measure learning.

22. The correct answer is (B). The review and revision of a literacy curriculum begins by analyzing state and national standards. Focusing on establishing standards for what students should learn is a first step in creating the philosophy and rationale that will serve to guide the development of a revised curriculum. (A) is incorrect because developing a scope and sequence document and a curriculum map is a step in the revision process that should follow the review of national, state, and local test data and review of surveys from stakeholders. (C) is incorrect because recruiting trainers and mentors that have responsibility for professional development sessions with new curriculum and materials should be the last step of the four described in this question. (D) is incorrect because reviewing local, state, and national test data and results of surveys intended to help guide the process from all stakeholders is the second step in revising a literacy curriculum.

23. The correct answer is (C). The reading specialist working collaboratively with teachers provides structure by helping the teachers focus on goals. (A) is incorrect because the process is not collaborative if the reading specialist selects the professional literature that all teachers must read. (B) is incorrect because merely observing lessons and handing teachers written evaluations is not collaborative and may not facilitate learning. (D) is incorrect because asking the principal to intervene is not collaborative and may not facilitate learning.

24. The correct answer is (B). Students make the most literacy growth when the reading specialist provides help or coaching to classroom teachers and support personnel as they implement literacy instruction. Students make gains when all personnel in a school work together as a team. (A) is incorrect because joining the International Literacy Association would not provide direct, immediate help to classroom teachers and education support personnel. (C) is incorrect because merely observing staff as they locate resources on recommended practices in a classroom would not provide help. (D) is incorrect because testing students would not provide direct, immediate help to classroom teachers and education support personnel. Testing students might reveal weaknesses in the program, but it would not show the personnel how to improve their instruction.

About the Constructed-Response Questions

The Reading Specialist test consists of three constructed-response questions that require the candidate to demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge and theory of reading to specific students' needs and classroom scenarios.

Each task will be scored on a 0–3 scale using the following general scoring guide:

General Scoring Guide for Constructed-Response Questions

Score of 3

The response demonstrates a thorough understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

A response in this category

- Clearly and specifically answers all parts of the question in a way that directly addresses the instructional situation described.
- Shows strong knowledge of concepts, theories, facts, procedures, or methodologies relevant to the question. Any errors of fact or terminology are minor and do not detract from the thorough understanding shown.
- Provides strong supporting evidence and rationales.

Score of 2

The response demonstrates general understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

A response in this category

- Adequately answers most or all parts of the question in a way that is appropriate for the instructional situation described.
- Shows general knowledge of concepts, theories, facts, procedures, or methodologies relevant to the question. Any errors of fact or terminology do not detract from the general understanding shown.
- Provides adequate supporting evidence and rationales.

Score of 1

The response demonstrates a weak or limited understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

A response in this category

- Answers some part (or parts) of the question at a basic level.
- Has one or more of the following weaknesses:
  - Fails to answer most parts of the question and/or fails to address crucial aspects of the instructional situation described
  - Shows weak or limited knowledge of concepts, theories, facts, procedures, or methodologies relevant to the question. The weakness may be indicated by errors or misconceptions.
  - Any evidence or rationales provided are weak or limited.

Score of 0

The response demonstrates no understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

A response in this category

- Fails to respond appropriately to any part of the question.
- Shows no knowledge of concepts, theories, facts, procedures, or methodologies relevant to the question; or any information presented about reading and reading instruction is seriously in error.

Note: The mere presence of reading-specific words or phrases that might be used in an adequate response does not by itself indicate knowledge.

Also receiving a score of 0 would be responses that are blank, completely off-topic, or not written in English.

Constructed-Response Question with Sample Responses and Annotations

Directions

Read the scenario and then respond to the TWO tasks in the answer sheet booklet. The suggested time to spend on this question is 10 minutes.

Scenario: At the beginning of the school year, the professional staff in a K-5 school meets to review the results of test data collected during the previous year to identify the specific literacy needs of the school's diverse student population. Following an analysis of students' strengths, weaknesses, and needs, the staff decides to organize itself as a professional learning community that will focus on ways to improve student literacy learning. The school's literacy specialist is assigned the leadership role in guiding the staff toward meeting their goal..

Tasks:

1. Identify and describe **THREE** principles characterizing an effective professional learning community.
2. Identify and explain the benefit of **TWO** strategies the literacy specialist can use in collaborating with teachers to enhance the quality of literacy instruction.

Sample Response that Received a Score of 3

Task 1:
A school's implementation of professional learning communities (PLCs) is intended to establish a schoolwide culture and environment of high trust in which a focus is built on planning and sustaining school improvement goals. One fundamental principle inherent in creating successful PLCs is that leaders in the process need to encourage all participants to work together collaboratively, rather than in isolation, to achieve a common goal—analyzing and improving classroom practices. The basic belief underlying this principle is that participants need to share responsibility for furthering students' literacy development. Second, effective PLCs ask participants to respond to a continual review of student test data to judge the effectiveness of what is happening in the classroom and change instructional practices when needed. Also, a major focus of PLCs is related to providing teachers multiple opportunities to

share their teaching practices and observe each other in the classroom. This practice helps teachers to make connections with each other, discuss ideas, and build on each other's teaching expertise.

Task 2:
There are a number of strategies the literacy specialist can use to collaborate with a teacher or a group of teachers. One technique is to provide scheduled times for the literacy specialist to model literacy lessons so that teachers can directly observe effective instructional strategies. Modeling "how to teach" helps teachers to learn first-hand what good practice looks like and then include the techniques in their own daily instruction. The literacy specialist can also plan scheduled times on the school calendar to conduct teacher workshops. During these workshops the specialist facilitates interactive professional learning activities related to various aspects of literacy instruction. This strategy allows teachers to learn new information, dialogue with each other about literacy instruction, and reflect upon their current teaching practices and how to improve.

Commentary on a Response with a Score of 3

This sample received a score of 3 because every part of both tasks is clearly and specifically addressed. In Task 1, the test-taker identified three basic principles inherent in a model of professional learning communities: encouraging teachers to work collaboratively rather than alone in furthering students' literacy growth, engaging in continual review of student test data and using the information to modify instructional practices when appropriate, and providing opportunities for teachers to make connections with peers and build on their own professional expertise by sharing ideas and observing other teachers. In Task 2, the test-taker thoroughly identified and explained the benefit of two literacy strategies the literacy specialist can use in collaborating with teachers: modeling literacy lessons for teachers and planning scheduled times for facilitating teacher workshops on a variety of literacy topics. This response demonstrates a thorough understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction.

Sample Response that Received a Score of 2

There are a number of principles that define professional learning communities as a way for a school to improve its instructional program in helping students learn literacy skills. Three of these underlying big ideas are the following:

Professional learning communities are a way for a leadership team to encourage teachers to gain greater expertise in the "how and why" of teaching literacy skills.

The communities represent an ongoing process involving a team of administrators, content specialists, and teachers who work collaboratively with a focus on improving instruction for students with differing needs.

A professional learning community is composed of a group of people in a school who have a shared vision of learning and strive to learn new and better ways to enhance students' literacy development.

Mr. Watson was assigned the role of planning and facilitating professional development activities. Some activities he can use are:

Setting up times for classroom teachers to observe each other teaching literacy lessons

Reviewing current scientifically based research findings on literacy instruction and posting the materials online for teachers to study.

Commentary on a Response with a Score of 2

This sample received a score of 2 because most parts of the question are addressed but at a general level. In Task 1, the test-taker adequately identifies three principles that characterize professional learning communities: 1) PLCs are a mechanism allowing teachers to gain expertise in literacy instruction, 2) PLCs involve a group of school-based stakeholders in a variety of positions who work collaboratively to improve instruction for all students, and 3) Members involved with PLCs share a common vision of learning and work to learn new and more effective ways to help students improve their literacy skills. In Task 2, the test-taker provides two strategies the literacy specialist can use when working with teachers—teacher observation of peers and access to online resources related to latest research findings in literacy instruction. However, the response is partial because an explanation of the benefit of having teachers engage in the activities is not provided. This response gives a general understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

Sample Response that Received a Score of 1

A professional learning community is a way for teachers to get together in groups to discuss how they are teaching students in their classrooms. They use the time the administration gives them to share ideas and then include new ideas in their lessons. A literacy specialist should meet with teachers and give them information about new techniques.

Commentary on a Response with a Score of 1

This response received a score of 1 because some parts of the question were answered at a weak or limited level. In Task 1, the test-taker provides an incomplete description of one principle (teachers working together in groups to discuss and share teaching ideas) that characterizes professional learning communities. In Task 2, the test-taker describes at a very limited level one strategy the literacy specialist can use (meeting with teachers and giving them information about new techniques) in working collaboratively with teachers to improve student achievement. An explanation of the strategy is not provided. This response demonstrates a weak or limited understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

4. Determine Your Strategy for Success

Set clear goals and deadlines so your test preparation is focused and efficient

Effective *Praxis* test preparation doesn't just happen. You'll want to set clear goals and deadlines for yourself along the way. Otherwise, you may not feel ready and confident on test day.

1) Learn what the test covers.

You may have heard that there are several different versions of the same test. It's true. You may take one version of the test and your friend may take a different version a few months later. Each test has different questions covering the same subject area, but both versions of the test measure the same skills and content knowledge.

You'll find specific information on the test you're taking on page 5, which outlines the content categories that the test measures and what percentage of the test covers each topic. Visit **www.ets.org/praxis/ testprep** for information on other *Praxis* tests.

2) Assess how well you know the content.

Research shows that test takers tend to overestimate their preparedness—this is why some test takers assume they did well and then find out they did not pass.

The *Praxis* tests are demanding enough to require serious review of likely content, and the longer you've been away from the content, the more preparation you will most likely need. If it has been longer than a few months since you've studied your content area, make a concerted effort to prepare.

3) Collect study materials.

Gathering and organizing your materials for review are critical steps in preparing for the *Praxis* tests. Consider the following reference sources as you plan your study:

- Did you take a course in which the content area was covered? If yes, do you still have your books or your notes?
- Does your local library have a high school-level textbook in this area? Does your college library have a good introductory college-level textbook in this area?

Practice materials are available for purchase for many *Praxis* tests at **www.ets.org/praxis/testprep**. Test preparation materials include sample questions and answers with explanations.

4) Plan and organize your time.

You can begin to plan and organize your time while you are still collecting materials. Allow yourself plenty of review time to avoid cramming new material at the end. Here are a few tips:

- Choose a test date far enough in the future to leave you plenty of preparation time. Test dates can be found at **www.ets.org/praxis/register/dates_centers**.
- Work backward from that date to figure out how much time you will need for review.
- Set a realistic schedule—and stick to it.

5) Practice explaining the key concepts.

Praxis tests with constructed-response questions assess your ability to explain material effectively. As a teacher, you'll need to be able to explain concepts and processes to students in a clear, understandable way. What are the major concepts you will be required to teach? Can you explain them in your own words accurately, completely, and clearly? Practice explaining these concepts to test your ability to effectively explain what you know.

6) Understand how questions will be scored.

Scoring information can be found on page 38.

7) Develop a study plan.

A study plan provides a road map to prepare for the *Praxis* tests. It can help you understand what skills and knowledge are covered on the test and where to focus your attention. Use the study plan template on page 31 to organize your efforts.

And most important—get started!

Would a Study Group Work for You?

Using this guide as part of a study group

People who have a lot of studying to do sometimes find it helpful to form a study group with others who are working toward the same goal. Study groups give members opportunities to ask questions and get detailed answers. In a group, some members usually have a better understanding of certain topics, while others in the group may be better at other topics. As members take turns explaining concepts to one another, everyone builds self-confidence.

If the group encounters a question that none of the members can answer well, the group can go to a teacher or other expert and get answers efficiently. Because study groups schedule regular meetings, members study in a more disciplined fashion. They also gain emotional support. The group should be large enough so that multiple people can contribute different kinds of knowledge, but small enough so that it stays focused. Often, three to six members is a good size.

Here are some ways to use this guide as part of a study group:

- **Plan the group's study program.** Parts of the study plan template, beginning on page 31, can help to structure your group's study program. By filling out the first five columns and sharing the worksheets, everyone will learn more about your group's mix of abilities and about the resources, such as textbooks, that members can share with the group. In the sixth column ("Dates I will study the content"), you can create an overall schedule for your group's study program.

- **Plan individual group sessions.** At the end of each session, the group should decide what specific topics will be covered at the next meeting and who will present each topic. Use the topic headings and subheadings in the Test at a Glance table on page 5 to select topics, and then select practice questions, beginning on page 13.

- **Prepare your presentation for the group.** When it's your turn to present, prepare something that is more than a lecture. Write two or three original questions to pose to the group. Practicing writing actual questions can help you better understand the topics covered on the test as well as the types of questions you will encounter on the test. It will also give other members of the group extra practice at answering questions.

- **Take a practice test together.** The idea of a practice test is to simulate an actual administration of the test, so scheduling a test session with the group will add to the realism and may also help boost everyone's confidence. Remember, complete the practice test using only the time that will be allotted for that test on your administration day.

- **Learn from the results of the practice test.** Review the results of the practice test, including the number of questions answered correctly in each content category. For tests that contain constructed-response questions, look at the Sample Test Questions section, which also contain sample responses to those questions and shows how they were scored. Then try to follow the same guidelines that the test scorers use.

- **Be as critical as you can.** You're not doing your study partner(s) any favors by letting them get away with an answer that does not cover all parts of the question adequately.

- **Be specific.** Write comments that are as detailed as the comments about the sample responses. Indicate where and how your study partner(s) are doing an inadequate job of answering the question. Writing notes in the margins of the answer sheet may also help.

- **Be supportive.** Include comments that point out what your study partner(s) got right.

Then plan one or more study sessions based on aspects of the questions on which group members performed poorly. For example, each group member might be responsible for rewriting one paragraph of a response in which someone else did an inadequate job.

Whether you decide to study alone or with a group, remember that the best way to prepare is to have an organized plan. The plan should set goals based on specific topics and skills that you need to learn, and it should commit you to a realistic set of deadlines for meeting those goals. Then you need to discipline yourself to stick with your plan and accomplish your goals on schedule.

5. Develop Your Study Plan

Develop a personalized study plan and schedule

Planning your study time is important because it will help ensure that you review all content areas covered on the test. Use the sample study plan below as a guide. It shows a plan for the *Core Academic Skills for Educators: Reading* test. Following that is a study plan template that you can fill out to create your own plan. Use the "Learn about Your Test" and "Test Specifications" information beginning on page 5 to help complete it.

Use this worksheet to:
1. **Define Content Areas:** List the most important content areas for your test as defined in chapter 1.
2. **Determine Strengths and Weaknesses:** Identify your strengths and weaknesses in each content area.
3. **Identify Resources:** Identify the books, courses, and other resources you plan to use for each content area.
4. **Study:** Create and commit to a schedule that provides for regular study periods.

Praxis Test Name (Test Code): Core Academic Skills for Educators: Reading (5713)
Test Date: 9/15/19

Content covered	Description of content	How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)	What resources do I have/need for the content?	Where can I find the resources I need?	Dates I will study the content	Date completed
Key Ideas and Details						
Close reading	Draw inferences and implications from the directly stated content of a reading selection	3	Middle school English textbook	College library, middle school teacher	7/15/19	7/15/19
Determining Ideas	Identify summaries or paraphrases of the main idea or primary purpose of a reading selection	3	Middle school English textbook	College library, middle school teacher	7/17/19	7/17/19
Determining Ideas	Identify summaries or paraphrases of the supporting ideas and specific details in a reading selection	3	Middle and high school English textbook	College library, middle and high school teachers	7/20/19	7/21/19
Craft, Structure, and Language Skills						
Interpreting tone	Determine the author's attitude toward material discussed in a reading selection	4	Middle and high school English textbook	College library, middle and high school teachers	7/25/19	7/26/19
Analysis of structure	Identify key transition words and phrases in a reading selection and how they are used	3	Middle and high school English textbook, dictionary	College library, middle and high school teachers	7/25/19	7/27/19
Analysis of structure	Identify how a reading selection is organized in terms of cause/effect, compare/contrast, problem/solution, etc.	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/19	8/1/19
Author's purpose	Determine the role that an idea, reference, or piece of information plays in an author's discussion or argument	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/19	8/1/19

Content covered	Description of content	How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)	What resources do I have/need for the content?	Where can I find the resources I need?	Dates I will study the content	Date completed
Language in different contexts	Determine whether information presented in a reading selection is presented as fact or opinion	4	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/19	8/1/19
Contextual meaning	Identify the meanings of words as they are used in the context of a reading selection	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/1/19	8/1/19
Figurative Language	Understand figurative language and nuances in word meanings	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/8/19	8/8/19
Vocabulary range	Understand a range of words and phrases sufficient for reading at the college and career readiness level	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/15/19	8/17/19
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas						
Diverse media and formats	Analyze content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/22/19	8/24/19
Evaluation of arguments	Identify the relationship among ideas presented in a reading selection	4	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/24/19	8/24/19
Evaluation of arguments	Determine whether evidence strengthens, weakens, or is relevant to the arguments in a reading selection	3	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/27/19	8/27/19
Evaluation of arguments	Determine the logical assumptions upon which an argument or conclusion is based	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/28/19	8/30/19
Evaluation of arguments	Draw conclusions from material presented in a reading selection	5	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	8/30/19	8/31/19
Comparison of texts	Recognize or predict ideas or situations that are extensions of or similar to what has been presented in a reading selection	4	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	9/3/19	9/4/19
Comparison of texts	Apply ideas presented in a reading selection to other situations	2	High school textbook, college course notes	College library, course notes, high school teacher, college professor	9/5/19	9/6/19

My Study Plan

Use this worksheet to:

1. **Define Content Areas:** List the most important content areas for your test as defined in chapter 1.
2. **Determine Strengths and Weaknesses:** Identify your strengths and weaknesses in each content area.
3. **Identify Resources:** Identify the books, courses, and other resources you plan to use for each content area.
4. **Study:** Create and commit to a schedule that provides for regular study periods.

Praxis Test Name (Test Code): _____

Test Date: _____

Content covered	Description of content	How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)	What resources do I have/need for this content?	Where can I find the resources I need?	Dates I will study this content	Date completed

Content covered	Description of content	How well do I know the content? (scale 1–5)	What resources do I have/need for the content?	Where can I find the resources I need?	Dates I will study the content	Date completed

6. Review Smart Tips for Success

Follow test-taking tips developed by experts

Learn from the experts. Take advantage of the following answers to questions you may have and practical tips to help you navigate the *Praxis* test and make the best use of your time.

Should I guess?

Yes. Your score is based on the number of questions you answer correctly, with no penalty or subtraction for an incorrect answer. When you don't know the answer to a question, try to eliminate any obviously wrong answers and then guess at the correct one. Try to pace yourself so that you have enough time to carefully consider every question.

Can I answer the questions in any order?

You can answer the questions in order or skip questions and come back to them later. If you skip a question, you can also mark it so that you can remember to return and answer it later. Remember that questions left unanswered are treated the same as questions answered incorrectly, so it is to your advantage to answer every question.

Are there trick questions on the test?

No. There are no hidden meanings or trick questions. All of the questions on the test ask about subject matter knowledge in a straightforward manner.

Are there answer patterns on the test?

No. You might have heard this myth: the answers on tests follow patterns. Another myth is that there will never be more than two questions in a row with the correct answer in the same position among the choices. Neither myth is true. Select the answer you think is correct based on your knowledge of the subject.

Can I write on the scratch paper I am given?

Yes. You can work out problems on the scratch paper, make notes to yourself, or write anything at all. Your scratch paper will be destroyed after you are finished with it, so use it in any way that is helpful to you. But make sure to select or enter your answers on the computer.

Smart Tips for Taking the Test

1. **Skip the questions you find extremely difficult.** Rather than trying to answer these on your first pass through the test, you may want to leave them blank and mark them so that you can return to them later. Pay attention to the time as you answer the rest of the questions on the test, and try to finish with 10 or 15 minutes remaining so that you can go back over the questions you left blank. Even if you don't know the answer the second time you read the questions, see if you can narrow down the possible answers, and then guess. Your score is based on the number of right answers, so it is to your advantage to answer every question.

2. **Keep track of the time.** The on-screen clock will tell you how much time you have left. You will probably have plenty of time to answer all of the questions, but if you find yourself becoming bogged down, you might decide to move on and come back to any unanswered questions later.

3. **Read all of the possible answers before selecting one.** For questions that require you to select more than one answer, or to make another kind of selection, consider the most likely answers given what the question is asking. Then reread the question to be sure the answer(s) you have given really answer the question. Remember, a question that contains a phrase such as "Which of the following does NOT …" is asking for the one answer that is NOT a correct statement or conclusion.

4. **Check your answers.** If you have extra time left over at the end of the test, look over each question and make sure that you have answered it as you intended. Many test takers make careless mistakes that they could have corrected if they had checked their answers.

5. **Don't worry about your score when you are taking the test.** No one is expected to answer all of the questions correctly. Your score on this test is not analogous to your score on the *GRE*® or other tests. It doesn't matter on the *Praxis* tests whether you score very high or barely pass. If you meet the minimum passing scores for your state and you meet the state's other requirements for obtaining a teaching license, you will receive a license. In other words, what matters is meeting the minimum passing score. You can find passing scores for all states that use the *Praxis* tests at https://www.ets.org/praxis/institutions/scores/passing/ or on the web site of the state for which you are seeking certification/licensure.

6. **Use your energy to take the test, not to get frustrated by it.** Getting frustrated only increases stress and decreases the likelihood that you will do your best. Highly qualified educators and test development professionals, all with backgrounds in teaching, worked diligently to make the test a fair and valid measure of your knowledge and skills. Your state painstakingly reviewed the test before adopting it as a licensure requirement. The best thing to do is concentrate on answering the questions.

7. Check on Testing Accommodations

See if you qualify for accommodations to take the Praxis *test*

What if English is not my primary language?

Praxis tests are given only in English. If your primary language is not English (PLNE), you may be eligible for extended testing time. For more details, visit **www.ets.org/praxis/register/plne_accommodations/**.

What if I have a disability or other health-related need?

The following accommodations are available for *Praxis* test takers who meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Amendments Act disability requirements:

- Extended testing time
- Additional rest breaks
- Separate testing room
- Writer/recorder of answers
- Test reader
- Sign language interpreter for spoken directions only
- Perkins Brailler
- Braille slate and stylus
- Printed copy of spoken directions
- Oral interpreter
- Audio test
- Braille test
- Large print test book
- Large print answer sheet
- Listening section omitted

For more information on these accommodations, visit **www.ets.org/praxis/register/disabilities**.

Note: Test takers who have health-related needs requiring them to bring equipment, beverages, or snacks into the testing room or to take extra or extended breaks must request these accommodations by following the procedures described in the *Bulletin Supplement for Test Takers with Disabilities or Health-Related Needs* (PDF), which can be found at **https://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/bulletin_supplement_test_takers_with_ disabilities_health_needs.pdf**.

You can find additional information on available resources for test takers with disabilities or health-related needs at **www.ets.org/disabilities**.

8. Do Your Best on Test Day

Get ready for test day so you will be calm and confident

You followed your study plan. You prepared for the test. Now it's time to prepare for test day.

Plan to end your review a day or two before the actual test date so you avoid cramming. Take a dry run to the test center so you're sure of the route, traffic conditions, and parking. Most of all, you want to eliminate any unexpected factors that could distract you from your ultimate goal—passing the *Praxis* test!

On the day of the test, you should:

- be well rested
- wear comfortable clothes and dress in layers
- eat before you take the test
- bring an acceptable and valid photo identification with you
- bring an approved calculator only if one is specifically permitted for the test you are taking (see Calculator Use, at http://www.ets.org/praxis/test_day/policies/calculators)
- be prepared to stand in line to check in or to wait while other test takers check in

You can't control the testing situation, but you can control yourself. Stay calm. The supervisors are well trained and make every effort to provide uniform testing conditions, but don't let it bother you if the test doesn't start exactly on time. You will have the allotted amount of time once it does start.

You can think of preparing for this test as training for an athletic event. Once you've trained, prepared, and rested, give it everything you've got.

What items am I restricted from bringing into the test center?

You cannot bring into the test center personal items such as:

- handbags, knapsacks, or briefcases
- water bottles or canned or bottled beverages
- study materials, books, or notes
- pens, pencils, scrap paper, or calculators, unless specifically permitted for the test you are taking (see Calculator Use, at http://www.ets.org/praxis/test_day/policies/calculators)
- any electronic, photographic, recording, or listening devices

Personal items are not allowed in the testing room and will not be available to you during the test or during breaks. You may also be asked to empty your pockets. At some centers, you will be assigned a space to store your belongings, such as handbags and study materials. Some centers do not have secure storage space available, so please plan accordingly.

Test centers assume no responsibility for your personal items.

If you have health-related needs requiring you to bring equipment, beverages or snacks into the testing room or to take extra or extended breaks, you need to request accommodations in advance. Procedures for requesting accommodations are described in the **Bulletin Supplement for Test Takers with Disabilities or Health-related Needs (PDF)**.

Note: All cell phones, smart phones (e.g., Android® devices, iPhones®, etc.), and other electronic, photographic, recording, or listening devices are strictly prohibited from the test center. If you are seen with such a device, you will be dismissed from the test, your test scores will be canceled, and you will forfeit your test fees. If you are seen *using* such a device, the device will be confiscated and inspected. For more information on what you can bring to the test center, visit **www.ets.org/praxis/test_day/bring**.

Are You Ready?

Complete this checklist to determine whether you are ready to take your test.

- ❐ Do you know the testing requirements for the license or certification you are seeking in the state(s) where you plan to teach?

- ❐ Have you followed all of the test registration procedures?

- ❐ Do you know the topics that will be covered in each test you plan to take?

- ❐ Have you reviewed any textbooks, class notes, and course readings that relate to the topics covered?

- ❐ Do you know how long the test will take and the number of questions it contains?

- ❐ Have you considered how you will pace your work?

- ❐ Are you familiar with the types of questions for your test?

- ❐ Are you familiar with the recommended test-taking strategies?

- ❐ Have you practiced by working through the practice questions in this study companion or in a study guide or practice test?

- ❐ If constructed-response questions are part of your test, do you understand the scoring criteria for these questions?

- ❐ If you are repeating a *Praxis* test, have you analyzed your previous score report to determine areas where additional study and test preparation could be useful?

If you answered "yes" to the questions above, your preparation has paid off. Now take the *Praxis* test, do your best, pass it—and begin your teaching career!

9. Understand Your Scores

Understand how tests are scored and how to interpret your test scores

Of course, passing the *Praxis* test is important to you so you need to understand what your scores mean and what your state requirements are.

What are the score requirements for my state?

States, institutions, and associations that require the tests set their own passing scores. Visit www.ets.org/praxis/states for the most up-to-date information.

If I move to another state, will my new state accept my scores?

The *Praxis* tests are part of a national testing program, meaning that they are required in many states for licensure. The advantage of a national program is that if you move to another state that also requires *Praxis* tests, you can transfer your scores. Each state has specific test requirements and passing scores, which you can find at www.ets.org/praxis/states.

How do I know whether I passed the test?

Your score report will include information on passing scores for the states you identified as recipients of your test results. If you test in a state with automatic score reporting, you will also receive passing score information for that state.

A list of states and their passing scores for each test are available online at www.ets.org/praxis/states.

What your *Praxis* scores mean

You received your score report. Now what does it mean? It's important to interpret your score report correctly and to know what to do if you have questions about your scores.

Visit http://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/sample_score_report.pdf to see a sample score report.
To access *Understanding Your Praxis Scores*, a document that provides additional information on how to read your score report, visit www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand.

Put your scores in perspective

Your score report indicates:

- Your score and whether you passed
- The range of possible scores
- The raw points available in each content category
- The range of the middle 50 percent of scores on the test

If you have taken the same *Praxis* test or other *Praxis* tests in the last 10 years, your score report also lists the highest score you earned on each test taken.

Content category scores and score interpretation

Questions on the *Praxis* tests are categorized by content. To help you in future study or in preparing to retake the test, your score report shows how many raw points you earned in each content category. Compare your "raw points earned" with the maximum points you could have earned ("raw points available"). The greater the difference, the greater the opportunity to improve your score by further study.

Score scale changes

ETS updates *Praxis* tests on a regular basis to ensure they accurately measure the knowledge and skills that are required for licensure. When tests are updated, the meaning of the score scale may change, so requirements may vary between the new and previous versions. All scores for previous, discontinued tests are valid and reportable for 10 years, provided that your state or licensing agency still accepts them.

These resources may also help you interpret your scores:

- *Understanding Your Praxis Scores* (PDF), found at **www.ets.org/praxis/scores/understand**

- *Praxis* Passing Scores, found at **https://www.ets.org/praxis/institutions/scores/passing/**

- State requirements, found at **www.ets.org/praxis/states**

Appendix: Other Questions You May Have

Here is some supplemental information that can give you a better understanding of the *Praxis* tests.

What do the *Praxis* tests measure?

The *Praxis* tests measure the specific knowledge and skills that beginning teachers need. The tests do not measure an individual's disposition toward teaching or potential for success, nor do they measure your actual teaching ability. The assessments are designed to be comprehensive and inclusive but are limited to what can be covered in a finite number of questions and question types. Teaching requires many complex skills that are typically measured in other ways, including classroom observation, video recordings, and portfolios.

Ranging from Agriculture to World Languages, there are more than 80 *Praxis* tests, which contain selected-response questions or constructed-response questions, or a combination of both.

Who takes the tests and why?

Some colleges and universities use the *Praxis* Core Academic Skills for Educators tests (Reading, Writing, and Mathematics) to evaluate individuals for entry into teacher education programs. The assessments are generally taken early in your college career. Many states also require Core Academic Skills test scores as part of their teacher licensing process.

Individuals entering the teaching profession take the *Praxis* content and pedagogy tests as part of the teacher licensing and certification process required by many states. In addition, some professional associations and organizations require the *Praxis* Subject Assessments for professional licensing.

Do all states require these tests?

The *Praxis* tests are currently required for teacher licensure in approximately 40 states and United States territories. These tests are also used by several professional licensing agencies and by several hundred colleges and universities. Teacher candidates can test in one state and submit their scores in any other state that requires *Praxis* testing for licensure. You can find details at **www.ets.org/praxis/states**.

What is licensure/certification?

Licensure in any area—medicine, law, architecture, accounting, cosmetology—is an assurance to the public that the person holding the license possesses sufficient knowledge and skills to perform important occupational activities safely and effectively. In the case of teacher licensing, a license tells the public that the individual has met predefined competency standards for beginning teaching practice.

Because a license makes such a serious claim about its holder, licensure tests are usually quite demanding. In some fields, licensure tests have more than one part and last for more than one day. Candidates for licensure in all fields plan intensive study as part of their professional preparation. Some join study groups, others study alone. But preparing to take a licensure test is, in all cases, a professional activity. Because a licensure exam surveys a broad body of knowledge, preparing for a licensure exam takes planning, discipline, and sustained effort.

Why does my state require the *Praxis* tests?

Your state chose the *Praxis* tests because they assess the breadth and depth of content—called the "domain"—that your state wants its teachers to possess before they begin to teach. The level of content knowledge, reflected in the passing score, is based on recommendations of panels of teachers and teacher educators in

each subject area. The state licensing agency and, in some states, the state legislature ratify the passing scores that have been recommended by panels of teachers.

How were the tests developed?

ETS consulted with practicing teachers and teacher educators around the country during every step of the *Praxis* test development process. First, ETS asked them what knowledge and skills a beginning teacher needs to be effective. Their responses were then ranked in order of importance and reviewed by hundreds of teachers.

After the results were analyzed and consensus was reached, guidelines, or specifications, for the selected-response and constructed-response tests were developed by teachers and teacher educators. Following these guidelines, teachers and professional test developers created test questions that met content requirements and *ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness*.*

When your state adopted the research-based *Praxis* tests, local panels of teachers and teacher educators evaluated each question for its relevance to beginning teachers in your state. During this "validity study," the panel also provided a passing-score recommendation based on how many of the test questions a beginning teacher in your state would be able to answer correctly. Your state's licensing agency determined the final passing-score requirement.

ETS follows well-established industry procedures and standards designed to ensure that the tests measure what they are intended to measure. When you pass the *Praxis* tests your state requires, you are proving that you have the knowledge and skills you need to begin your teaching career.

How are the tests updated to ensure the content remains current?

Praxis tests are reviewed regularly. During the first phase of review, ETS conducts an analysis of relevant state and association standards and of the current test content. State licensure titles and the results of relevant job analyses are also considered. Revised test questions are then produced following the standard test development methodology. National advisory committees may also be convened to review and revise existing test specifications and to evaluate test forms for alignment with the specifications.

How long will it take to receive my scores?

Scores for tests that do not include constructed-response questions are available on screen immediately after the test. Scores for tests that contain constructed-response questions or essays aren't available immediately after the test because of the scoring process involved. Official score reports are available to you and your designated score recipients approximately two to three weeks after the test date for tests delivered continuously, or two to three weeks after the testing window closes for other tests. See the test dates and deadlines calendar at www. ets.org/praxis/register/dates_centers for exact score reporting dates.

Can I access my scores on the web?

All test takers can access their test scores via My *Praxis* Account free of charge for one year from the posting date. This online access replaces the mailing of a paper score report.

The process is easy—simply log into My *Praxis* Account at www.ets.org/praxis and click on your score report. If you do not already have a *Praxis* account, you must create one to view your scores.

Note: You must create a *Praxis* account to access your scores, even if you registered by mail or phone.

ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness (2014, Princeton, N.J.) are consistent with the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, industry standards issued jointly by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education (2014, Washington, D.C.).

Your teaching career is worth preparing for, so start today!

Let the *Praxis® Study Companion* guide you.

To search for the *Praxis* test prep resources
that meet your specific needs, visit:

www.ets.org/praxis/testprep

To purchase official test prep made by the creators
of the *Praxis* tests, visit the ETS Store:

www.ets.org/praxis/store

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