

# STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

## Assessment Review: Summary of Common Themes

May 2017

### Overview

ORC 3301.079 (I)(1)(a) established the English language arts academic standards review committee to review academic content standards in the subject of English language arts. ORC 3301.079 (I)(2)(b) requires: Each committee shall determine whether the assessments submitted to that committee under division (I)(4) of this section are appropriate for the committee's respective subject area and meet the academic content standards adopted under this section and community expectations.

The Standards and Assessment Review Committee for English Language Arts was comprised of four members: a high school English instructor, a director for a virtual academy, a parent representative and a representative from the Ohio Department of Higher Education.

In winter 2017, the Standards and Assessment Review Committee was charged with reviewing testing items from the spring 2016 administration of Ohio's State Tests. The committee reviewed grades 3-10 assessment items and recorded their findings on a rubric that questioned if the items in the reporting category were aligned to Ohio's Learning Standards for English Language Arts, appropriate for the assigned grade level, and if the items met community expectations.

Ohio's State Tests for English Language Arts review rubric was divided into three main categories that were reflective of the English Language Arts testing blueprint: Reading Literary Text, Reading Informational Text and Writing. Reading Literature and Reading Information assessed how well students could demonstrate comprehension and draw evidence from complex, grade-level literary and informational text by examining key ideas and details that help shape the plot, the author's craft and structure of the text, how ideas are integrated from multiple sources or mediums, and vocabulary. The writing category presented extended response items that assessed how well students could produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style was appropriate to the task, purpose and audience.

The review and comments from the Standard and Assessment Review Committee were shared with Ohio's State Test development teams in the continued effort to address any issues and recommendations provided by the review committee. This information provided additional guidance and informed the development and the review of items for each grade level.

### General Comments

Overall, the committee's reviews reflected that the items met the alignment criteria, were grade level appropriate, and met community expectations. The committee made mention of a few items that should be considered for future item development. They thought Ohio's State Tests

were much easier than the previously adopted assessments. They also liked the idea that there was only one summative assessment rather than a mid-year and summative piece that was present in the previous year's assessment.

## Assessment Review

1. The items in each of the reporting categories align to the standards.
  - Overall, the committee's review reflected alignment to the standards across all grade levels.
2. The items in each of the reporting categories are grade level appropriate.
  - The members noted that the items were grade level appropriate; however, there were a few areas noted in their rubrics that were only partially aligned.
  - The committee felt that the early grade assessments were appropriate for the subject and content standards; however, they felt the content on the grade 3 assessment was difficult. They thought the wording of multiple-meaning terms lacked clarity and could possibly cause some confusion for test-takers.
  - A note of concern from one member was that the number of sources required to compose an extended response was too much, and it would not be supported by the time allowed. They also thought this was inconsistent within the grade levels. Two grades used four sources while other grades only used two sources to compose an extended response.
  - One reviewer commented that the items aligned and, overall, the test was simplistic. But again, the reviewer noted the inconsistency of the number of sources when responding to the items.
  - One member felt that the middle grades and high school (6-10) assessments were appropriate for the subject and content standards, yet there was a leap in the types of texts used on the high school assessments. The reviewer noted that while the texts were grade level appropriate, they were not as engaging as the earlier grades.
3. The items in each of the reporting categories meet community expectation (fairness and sensitivity guidelines).
  - Overall, the items presented in the three high school assessments were deemed appropriate and met community expectations.
4. Reviewers provided comments about the technology and functionality of the tests.
  - One member noted that the technology used was a lot more efficient than the previous assessment. More of the issues were found to be at the district level rather than the assessments.
  - One member noted that students should take more time to get used to the technology functions (e.g., scrolling), so it would not present a challenge on the actual day of testing.