2016–2017 NC Final Exams of English I, III, and IV
North Carolina Assessment Specifications

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Purpose of the Assessments

☐ NC Final Exams were developed to replace locally developed assessments, providing teachers and principals with a common measure for all students state-wide during a given testing window. NC Final Exam scores (along with any other relevant end-of-course or end-of-grade assessment scores) will be used in the Educational Value Added Assessment System (EVAAS) to produce student growth measures.

☐ North Carolina's Final Exams for High School English Language Arts (ELA) will measure students' academic progress in the NC *Standard Course of Study*, adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education in June 2010.

☐ NC State Board of Education policy GCS-A-016 directs schools to use the results from all course-specific NC Final Exams as a minimum of 20% of the student's final course grade.

☐ NC Final Exams will not be used for school and district accountability under the READY Accountability Model or for federal reporting purposes.

Developing Assessments

☐ North Carolina educators were recruited and trained to write new items for the NC Final Exams. The diversity among the item writers and their knowledge of the current standards was addressed during recruitment. Trained North Carolina educators also review items and suggest improvements, if necessary. The use of North Carolina educators to develop and review items strengthens the instructional validity of the items.

☐ For an in-depth explanation of the test development process see State Board policy GCS-A-013 or reference the *Test Development Process: Item, Selection and Form Development* (Updated May 2016).

Curriculum and Assessment Cycle

☐ June 2010: North Carolina State Board of Education adoption of the NC *Standard Course of Study*.

☐ 2012–13: Operational administration of the Measures of Student Learning: Common Exams.

☐ 2013–14: Redesign and subsequent first operational administration of the NC Final Exams.

☐ 2014–15: Second operational administration of the NC Final Exams.

☐ 2015–16: Third operational administration of the NC Final Exams.

☐ 2016–17: Fourth operational administration of the NC Final Exams.

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Prioritization of Standards

 Members of the Test Development section of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) invited teachers to collaborate and develop recommendations for a prioritization of the standards indicating the relative importance of each standard, the anticipated instructional time, and the appropriateness of the standard for multiple-choice and constructed response item formats.

 Tables 1–3 describe range of total items that will appear on the NC Final Exams forms. English I and IV will consist of only multiple-choice items. English III will also include two constructed response items. Students will probably take twice as long to answer the constructed response items. The multiple-choice items are worth one point each and the constructed response item is worth two points.

*Table 1. Test Specification Weights for the **English I** NC Final Exam*

Domain (2010 NC *Standard Course of Study*)	Standards	Range of Total Items
Language	L.4, L.5	10% to 15%
Reading for Informational Text	RI.1–RI.6	35% to 40%
Reading for Literature	RL.1–RL.6	45% to 50%
Total		100%

*Table 2. Test Specification Weights for the **English III** NC Final Exam*

Domain (2010 NC *Standard Course of Study*)	Standards	Range of Total Items
Language	L.4, L.5	12% to 17%
Reading for Informational Text	RI.1–RI.6	35% to 40%
Reading for Literature	RL.1–RL.6	50% to 55%
Total		100%

*Table 3. Test Specification Weights for the **English IV** NC Final Exam*

Domain (2010 NC *Standard Course of Study*)	Standards	Range of Total Items
Language	L.4, L.5	10% to 15%
Reading for Informational Text	RI.1–RI.6, RI.8	30% to 35%
Reading for Literature	RL.1–RL.6	50% to 55%
Total		100%

☐ Constructed response items on the NC Final Exam of English III will draw from the following NC *Standard Course of Study* standards:

- Reading for Literature.2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

- Reading for Informational Text.2. Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

Cognitive Rigor
☐ NC Final Exams items for English I, English III and English IV were aligned to Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK). Webb's alignment model was used to classify items based on cognitive complexity.

☐ Multiple-choice items will require students to read, comprehend, and analyze information. Also, students will be expected to analyze the reading passages; identify points of view, claims, and evidence; apply concepts and skills; and make inferences.

Types of Items and Supplemental Materials
☐ The NC Final Exams for English I, III, and IV will consist of four-response-option multiple-choice items. English III will also contain constructed response items.

☐ Each form will consist of selections drawn from works of literature, which includes short story and poetry, or informational texts, drawn from the domains of History/Social Studies or Science/Technology.

☐ In English III, two selections will have a constructed response item. The constructed response items will be short answer and can typically be answered well in a paragraph or less. Each constructed response item will target reading skills and will also measure specific writing skills. The short answer item will be worth two points each.

- ✓ Students taking the exam on paper will write their responses on the 9 lines provided on the answer sheet. Students must not write beyond the end of the lines or in the margins. Words written in the margins or unlined areas of the answer sheet will not be scored. Students must not add more lines to the answer sheet. Words written on extra lines will not be scored. Scorers only review for the specific criteria as stated in the item. Additional information not required in the answer does not increase the student's score.

- ✓ Students taking the online format will type their responses in a text box. The online text box allows for 1000 characters.

- ✓ It is permissible to respond in bullets.

- ✓ The English III answer sheet may be reviewed at NCDPI/Accountability Services Website. The answer sheet may be shared with students to familiarize them with the expectations.

A complete list of the supplemental test materials (i.e., *NC Final Exams Materials List*) may be reviewed at the NCDPI/Accountability Services website.

 Released items are available on the NCDPI/Accountability Services website. Released items may be used by school systems to help acquaint students with items. The released items may not reflect the breadth of the standards assessed and/or the range of item difficulty found on the NC Final Exam. These materials must not be used for personal or financial gain. The released items are also available to schools through NCTest, the NCDPI's online assessment platform.

 Schools must ensure every student participating in an online assessment for the North Carolina Testing Program completes the Online Assessment Tutorial for the associated assessment at least once at the school before test day. The tutorial provides students the opportunity to practice the mechanics of navigating through the testing platform, to become familiar with the tools, and to respond to the sample items. Refer to the *North Carolina Test Coordinators' Policies and Procedures Handbook* (PDF pages 14, 42, 103) for additional information.

Testing Structure and Test Administration Time
 The NC Final Exams of English I and IV contain a total of 50 multiple-choice items. For English III, the exam contains 48 multiple-choice items and two constructed response items. Included in the total item counts are embedded multiple-choice field test items that will not count toward the students score but will be used for purposes of developing items for future test forms.

NC Final Exam 2016-17	Number of Operational Items	Number of Field Test Items*	Total Number of Items
English I	40 multiple-choice	10 multiple-choice	50
English III	39 multiple-choice, 1 constructed response	9 multiple-choice, 1 constructed response	50
English IV	40 multiple-choice	10 multiple-choice	50

*Field test items will not count toward the students score but will be used for purposes of developing items for future test forms.

 Students will be given 120 minutes to answer all items.

 Appendices A–C show the number of operational items for each standard assessed by the 2016–17 NC Final Exams. Note that future coverage of standards could vary within the constraints of the content category weights in *Tables 1–3*.

Test Cycle and Delivery Mode
 The NC Final Exams are administered to students enrolled in fall and spring courses. A list of course codes that align with the 2016–17 NC Final Exams (i.e., *Course Codes that Align with the NC Final Exams*) is available on the NCDPI/Accountability Services website.

 The NC Final Exams are administered through NCTest, the NCDPI's online assessment platform. Paper editions are available.

 The NC Final Exams are only provided in English. Native language translation versions are not available.

English I NC Final Exam 2016–17
Number of Operational Items by Standard

The following table shows the number of operational items for each standard. Note that future coverage of standards could vary within the constraints of the test specification weights in *Tables 1–3*. Some standards not designated with tested items (i.e., "−") may be a prerequisite standard, may be tested within the context of another standard or may be included as an embedded field test item.

English I Standard (Grades 9–10)	Number of Operational Items by Standard
Reading Standards for Literature	
RL.1	5
RL.2	2
RL.3	2
RL.4	3
RL.5	5
RL.6	1
RL.7	−
RL.9	−
RL.10	−
Language Standards	
L.1	−
L.2	−
L.3	−
L.4.a	4
L.4.b	−
L.4.c	−
L.4.d	−
L.5.a	2
L.5.b	−
L.6	−
Reading Standards for Informational Text	
RI.1	2
RI.2	4
RI.3	3
RI.4	3
RI.5	2
RI.6	2
RI.7	−
RI.8	−
RI.9	−
RI.10	−

The following table shows the number of operational items for each standard. Note that future coverage of standards could vary within the constraints of the test specification weights in *Tables 1–3*. Some standards not designated with tested items (i.e., "–") may be a prerequisite standard, may be tested within the context of another standard or may be included as an embedded field test item.

English III Standard (Grades 11–12)	Number of Operational Items by Standard
Reading Standards for Literature	
RL.1	5
RL.2	3
RL.3	3
RL.4	3
RL.5	3
RL.6	4
RL.7	–
RL.9	–
RL.10	–
Language Standards	
L.1	–
L.2	–
L.3.a	–
L.4.a	2
L.4.b	–
L.4.c	–
L.4.d	–
L.5.a	4
L.5.b	–
L.6	–
Reading Standards for Informational Text	
RI.1	2
RI.2	–
RI.3	4
RI.4	3
RI.5	3
RI.6	1
RI.7	–
RI.8	–
RI.9	–
RI.10	–

Appendix C
English IV NC Final Exam 2016–17
Number of Operational Items by Standard

The following table shows the number of operational items for each standard. Note that future coverage of standards could vary within the constraints of the test specification weights in *Tables 1–3*. Some standards not designated with tested items (i.e., "−") may be a prerequisite standard, may be tested within the context of another standard or may be included as an embedded field test item.

English IV Standard (Grades 11–12)	Number of Operational Items by Standard
Reading Standards for Literature	
RL.1	4
RL.2	3
RL.3	4
RL.4	4
RL.5	4
RL.6	3
RL.7	−
RL.9	−
RL.10	−
Language Standards	
L.1	−
L.2	−
L.3.a	−
L.4.a	2
L.4.b	−
L.4.c	−
L.4.d	−
L.5.a	3
L.5.b	−
L.6	−
Reading Standards for Informational Text	
RI.1	2
RI.2	2
RI.3	4
RI.4	1
RI.5	2
RI.6	2
RI.7	−
RI.8	−
RI.9	−
RI.10	−