

North Carolina End-of-Grade Test of Reading Comprehension—Grade 3

What are the purposes of the NC Testing Program?

The North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests are required by General Statute 115C-174.10 as a component of the North Carolina Annual Testing Program. As stated, the purposes of North Carolina state-mandated tests are “(i) to assure that all high school graduates possess those minimum skills and that knowledge thought necessary to function as a member of society; (ii) to provide a means of identifying strengths and weaknesses in the education process in order to improve instructional delivery; and (iii) to establish additional means for making the education system at the State, local, and school levels accountable to the public for results.” This test is one component of the end-of-grade tests, which include reading comprehension and mathematics tests in grades three through eight. Students in grade three began taking a reading comprehension and mathematics pretest in the fall of 1996.

For school, school system, and state accountability, the scores from the grade three pretest are used as an estimate of a student’s entering level of knowledge and skills to determine the amount of growth during the school year (calculated from the difference between the two sets of test scores).

What is measured by the test?

The end-of-grade reading test for grade three assesses the reading components of the grade three North Carolina *Standard Course of Study*. The test consists of eight reading selections with three to nine associated questions for each selection. Each student is asked to read five literary selections (two fiction, one nonfiction, one drama, one poem) and three informational selections (two content and one consumer). The variety of selections on each form allows for the assessment of reading for various purposes: for literary experience, to gain information, and to perform a task.

The end-of-grade tests are organized by category, with each item falling into one of four categories: cognition, interpretation, critical stance, or connections. A description of each category and the average percentage of items per form for each category are shown in the table below. Each item is also aligned to a curriculum objective from the North Carolina English Language Arts *Standard Course of Study*.

Descriptive Information for the North Carolina End-of-Grade Test of Reading Comprehension—Grade 3

Category	Description of Category	Average Percentage
Cognition	Refers to the initial strategies a reader uses to understand the selection. It is about purpose and organization of the selection. It considers the text as a whole or in a broad perspective. Cognition includes strategies like using context clues to determine meaning or summarizing to include main points	38%
Interpretation	Requires the student to develop a more complete understanding. It may ask students to clarify, to explain the significance of, to extend, and/or to adapt ideas/concepts.	37%
Critical Stance	Refers to tasks that ask the student to stand apart from the selection and consider it objectively. It involves processes like comparing/contrasting and understanding the impact of literary elements.	19%
Connections	Refers to connecting knowledge from the selection with other information and experiences. It involves the student being able to relate the selection to events beyond/outside the selection. In addition, the student will make associations outside the selection and between selections.	6%

How is the test administered? The North Carolina End-of-Grade Test of Reading Comprehension at grade three consists of 50 multiple-choice questions administered during a 115-minute block within the last three weeks of school. Three equivalent forms are administered in each classroom to provide information for curriculum evaluation and planning. The tests are scanned and scored by the local education agency with software provided by the NCDPI. Reports of student performance are produced locally. In addition, test scores are aggregated at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to fulfill the state and federal reporting requirements for the accountability programs.

How was the test developed? The reading selections were chosen by North Carolina educators to reflect the variety of reading done by students at this level in and out of school and to ensure accessibility to a majority of students. Those chosen are selections that would generally be read by students, would be interesting to the students, and have appropriate content for a reading comprehension test at this grade level. The questions for each selection were written and reviewed by trained North Carolina teachers and educators during the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 school years and were field tested in the spring of 2002. Each field test question was administered to approximately 1,400 students from randomly selected schools across the state. The grade three reading test was implemented statewide for the first time in the spring of 2003.

What kinds of scores do students receive on the test? The scores on the end-of-grade reading test are reported on a developmental scale, which allows the measurement of growth in achievement across the grade levels. On the grade three reading test the scale scores range from 216-272. The use of scale scores provides for easier and more consistent interpretations of the results from test to test. Achievement levels are also generated to provide an interpretation of student performance relative to a predetermined standard. Student scores are converted to one of the four achievement level categories shown below. In addition, student scores are reported as percentile ranks, which are generated from a statewide distribution of students who took the test during the first year the test was administered or the norming year.

Achievement Levels for the North Carolina End-of-Grade Test of Reading Comprehension—Grade 3

Level	Description	Scale Score Range
1	Students performing at this level do not have sufficient mastery of knowledge and skills in this subject area to be successful at the next grade level.	216-229
2	Students performing at this level demonstrate inconsistent mastery of knowledge and skills in this subject area and are minimally prepared to be successful at the next grade level.	230-239
3	Students performing at this level consistently demonstrate mastery of grade level subject matter and skills and are well prepared for the next grade level.	240-249
4	Students performing at this level consistently perform in a superior manner clearly beyond that required to be proficient at grade level work	250-272

Sample Items The following pages contain a sample selection and sample items that represent the type of material that appears on the North Carolina End-of-Grade Test of Reading Comprehension – Grade 3. The category and objective correspond to the category and curriculum objective that the item is designed to measure. The thinking skill corresponds to the level of thinking the item requires as defined by a thinking skills framework adapted from *Dimension of Thinking* by Robert J. Marzano and others. Additional samples can be found on the NCDPI web site at www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/eog.

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Read this selection to learn how the Donkey and the Monkey found out that they were better off than they thought and answer the questions that follow

The Donkey, the Monkey, and the Mole

by Aesop

One day a Donkey and a Monkey were talking together about how unhappy they were.

“My ears are so long that all the animals laugh at me,” said the Donkey. “I wish that I had beautiful horns upon my head like the Ox.”

“You look well enough,” said the Monkey. “But just look at me. Every time I turn my back, the other animals laugh at me.”

“Why do the other animals laugh at you?” asked the Donkey. “You look all right to me.”

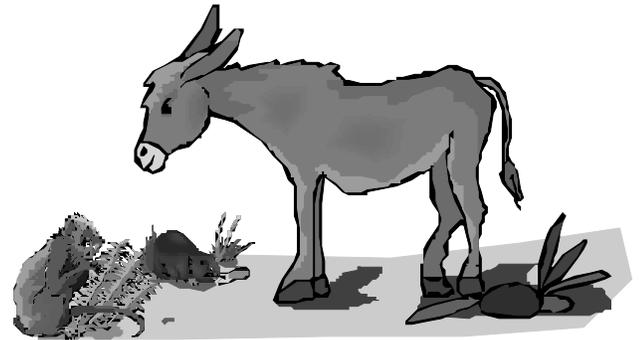
“They laugh at my funny-looking tail,” said the Monkey. “Now if I had a great big tail like the Fox, I would be a beautiful animal indeed.”

A Mole who had just come out of his hole in the ground had overheard the Donkey and the Monkey talking.

“Hold your tongues, both of you,” said the Mole. “You should be thankful for what you have. How would you like to be a Mole? The Moles have no horns at all. The Moles have no tail to speak of. The Moles are nearly blind. The Moles live in the dark under the ground most of the time.”

The Donkey and the Monkey said no more about the things they did not have.

We should be satisfied with what we have. There are always others not as well off as ourselves.



“The Donkey, the Monkey, and the Mole” by Aesop from *Aesop’s Stories for Pleasure Reading* by Edward W. Dolch.

1. What lesson did the Mole want his friends to learn?
 - A Good things come to those who wait.
 - B Good things come in small packages.
 - C If at first you do not succeed, try, try again.
 - D Be grateful for who you are.
2. Which of the following *best* describes what the Donkey and the Monkey were unhappy about?
 - A what they had to eat
 - B how much work they had
 - C where they lived
 - D how they looked

3. When the Mole says “Hold your tongues,” what is he telling the Donkey and the Monkey to do?
- A Stick out their tongues and hold them.
- B Stop talking in such an unhappy way.
- C Hold each other’s tongue.
- D Keep on talking to each other.
4. What did the Donkey and the Monkey have in common?
- A They both had funny-looking tails.
- B They both had long ears.
- C They both wanted to be like some other animal.
- D They both lived in the dark under the ground.
5. Which of the following statements is true?
- A The Donkey wanted a great big tail like the Fox.
- B The Mole had more to complain about than the Donkey or the Monkey.
- C The Monkey wanted beautiful horns like the Ox.
- D The Mole, the Donkey, and the Monkey were all satisfied with how they were.

End of Set

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***Answers to
Grade 3 Reading Comprehension Sample Items***

Passage Title	Question Number	Correct Answer	Category	Thinking Skill	Objective Number
The Donkey, the Monkey, and the Mole	1	D	Interpretation	Integrating	2.04
The Donkey, the Monkey, and the Mole	2	D	Cognition	Integrating	2.04
The Donkey, the Monkey, and the Mole	3	B	Interpretation	Integrating	2.04
The Donkey, the Monkey, and the Mole	4	C	Critical Stance	Analyzing	3.02
The Donkey, the Monkey, and the Mole	5	B	Interpretation	Generating	2.05