

North Carolina End-of-Grade Test of Reading Comprehension—Grade 5

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 end-of-grade tests at the prior grade are used to estimate a student’s level of knowledge and skills at the beginning of the new grade 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 five assesses the reading components of the grade five 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 5

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	35%
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.	39%
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.	20%
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 five 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 five 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 five reading test, the scale scores range from 228-277. 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 5

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.	228-238
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.	239-246
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.	247-258
4	Students performing at this level consistently perform in a superior manner clearly beyond that required to be proficient at grade level work	259-277

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 5. 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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How would you like to take care of bees? Read the following selection and answer the questions that follow.

Watching a Beekeeper

by Joan Davis

I froze in place as a cloud of honeybees buzzed around my head and arms. My only hope was that the big fancy net I was wearing would keep the bees out. You see, my friend Frank is a beekeeper. He not only keeps bees but he loves them, too. I joined him on this warm spring day to see how a beekeeper starts a new hive.

Frank needed some more hives, so he called a nearby bee ranch to order two boxes of bees. A few days later, the buzzing, vibrating boxes arrived at the post office. Each box was filled with more than ten thousand bees. A postal worker called Frank and asked him to please hurry and pick them up!

③ Honeybees had always seemed scary to me. But as I watched Frank work, I learned something. I learned that if you know how to handle bees the right way, beekeeping can be a great hobby.

Frank and I each wore a helmet and a net to protect us from bee stings. We used string to tie our pants around our ankles to keep any lost honeybees from crawling up our legs.

For hives, beekeepers use boxes with narrow wooden frames hanging inside. On each frame is a sheet of thin wax. The honeybees produce more wax from their bodies to make six-sided boxes, called cells, on these sheets. The queen bee lays eggs in some of the cells, and the bees store honey

and pollen in others. Each cell is just big enough for a honeybee to squeeze inside.

Frank sprayed sugar water on the mass of bees in the center of the mailing box. For a few minutes, this makes their wings too sticky to fly. Then he reached in for the tiny box containing the queen bee.

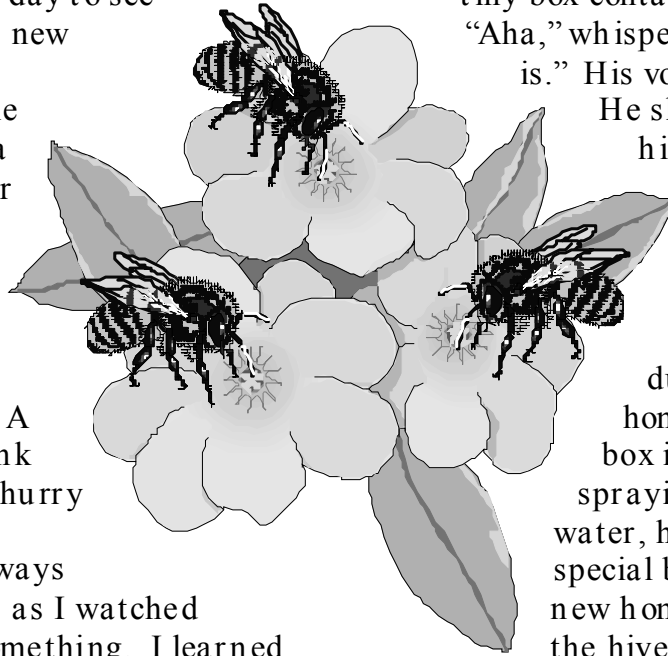
“Aha,” whispered Frank, “and here she is.” His voice was quiet but excited. He slipped the queen’s box into his pocket to keep her safe.

The queen is important to the hive, and the other honeybees will attack to protect her.

Moving quietly, he dumped the rest of the honeybees from the mailing box into the hive. After spraying the queen with sugar water, he took her out of the special box and placed her in her new home. He covered the top of the hive with a lid. Then he smiled at me and said, “Not one sting. They must really like you!”

Next, Frank opened a little door at the bottom of the hive. This would let the honeybees fly in and out to gather nectar and pollen for the hive. Honeybees use nectar to make honey. They use honey and pollen as food. Soon the queen would start laying eggs, and the hive would grow. Frank’s work for the day was done.

Later in the summer, I saw Frank again. He proudly presented me with a big jar of sweet, tasty honey made by my friends the honeybees.



1. What is the **main** purpose of this selection?
- A to warn the reader about the danger of bees
 - B to entertain the reader with humorous stories about bees
 - C to inform the reader with interesting facts about bees
 - D to convince the reader to start raising bees
2. This selection begins with the author saying, "I froze in place as a cloud of honeybees buzzed around my head and arms." What does the word *froze* mean in this sentence?
- A stopped
 - B walked
 - C became cold
 - D became confused
3. What is the **main** idea of paragraph 3?
- A Working with bees is very difficult.
 - B Raising bees is financially rewarding.
 - C Handling bees is scary and very dangerous.
 - D Raising bees can be enjoyable if you know how.
4. Why does Frank spray sugar water on the bees?
- A to give them special food
 - B to make their wings shiny
 - C to keep them from flying
 - D to make them produce honey
5. What does the final paragraph suggest about making honey?
- A Making honey is an easy task.
 - B Making honey is a fun activity.
 - C It takes only a few days to make honey.
 - D It takes a few months to make honey.

6. What is the *main* job that Frank completed?
- A separating the queen bee from the other bees
 - B moving all the bees into their new home
 - C teaching the bees to make honey
 - D showing his bees and hives to a friend

End of Set

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*Answers to
Grade 5 Reading Comprehension Sample Items*

Passage Title	Question Number	Correct Answer	Category	Thinking Skill	Objective Number
Watching a Beekeeper	1	C	Cognition	Analyzing	2.04
Watching a Beekeeper	2	A	Cognition	Analyzing	1.02
Watching a Beekeeper	3	D	Cognition	Analyzing	2.04
Watching a Beekeeper	4	C	Cognition	Knowledge	2.02
Watching a Beekeeper	5	D	Interpretation	Generating	2.05
Watching a Beekeepe	6	B	Cognition	Analyzing	2.02