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Assessment Brief



Public Schools of North Carolina

State Board of Education • Phillip J. Kirk, Jr., Chairman • North Carolina Department of Public Instruction • Michael E. Ward, Superintendent

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Understanding Statewide Testing: Glossary—Test Items

This publication is a reprint of the Spring 1995 Assessment Brief “Understanding Statewide Testing: Glossary—Test Items” (Vol. 1, No. 6). Terms used with multiple-choice, writing, and open-ended assessments are described below.

Assessment Formats

Multiple Choice	an assessment format in which the student is asked to choose the one correct <u>or</u> one best response to a given question from a list of possible options
On-Demand Writing	an assessment format in which the student is asked to create a written response to a specific prompt (e.g., based on either narrative, expository, or descriptive writing)
Open-Ended	an assessment format in which the student is asked to create a written response, where the correct response may vary—there is not simply one correct answer <u>or</u> there is more than one strategy for arriving at the answer; for example, essay
Performance	an assessment format in which the student is asked to apply knowledge and skills actively; an assessment task that requires the student to create an answer or product to demonstrate his or her knowledge or skills; for example, debate, science project
Portfolio	an assessment format in which is presented a collection of a student’s materials or evidences which represent his/her work or accomplishments (e.g., audio/video tapes and observations)

Terms Used in Test Items

Affect	to influence the reader or cause a particular response in the reader
Analyze	to separate into elemental parts or basic principles to determine the nature of the whole
Apply	to bring together relevant information from one situation and transfer it to another similar and appropriate situation
Assume	to take upon oneself; to adopt
Choose	to select from a number of possible alternatives
Clarify	to make clear or easier to understand
Compare	to appraise with respect to similarities and differences with the emphasis on similarities
Construct	to form or assemble by combining parts; to create (a sentence, for example) by systematically arranging ideas or terms; to draw (e.g., a geometric figure) that meets specific requirements
Contrast	to appraise with respect to differences
Convey	to impart or communicate by statement, suggestion, gesture, or appearance
Convince	to persuade to a viewpoint based upon specific references to the passage
Define	to state the precise meaning (of a word)
Describe	to respond to a question or statement by representing or giving an account, which is expressed in words, in order to produce a mental image, for the reader, of something observed or experienced by the writer
Develop	to elaborate
Discriminate	to make a clear distinction; to distinguish
Discuss	to consider (a subject) in speech or writing

Effect	the result or consequence of an action, situation, or condition
Elaborate	to add details, explanations, examples, or other relevant information to improve understanding
Evaluate	to assess or judge the reasonableness and quality of ideas or concepts
Explain	to respond to questions; to give and defend one's viewpoint citing appropriate, specific examples
Generate	to produce; to form (a geometric figure) by describing a curve or surface
Identify	to ascertain the origin, nature, or characteristics of
Imagine/Pretend	to form a notion or idea about something
Impression	a telling image or feeling that becomes fixed on the senses or the mind
Infer	to go beyond the available information to identify, describe, or discuss what may be true
Influence	to produce a change or an effect in someone or something in some intangible way with no apparent use of a direct command
Justify	to defend a response using specific examples and references
List	to make a list of; to itemize
Locate	to find by searching, examining, or experimenting
Organize	to give order to or create a functioning, coherent whole from coordinated or interdependent parts
Perform	to begin and carry through to completion; to do
Predict	to estimate future behavior or events based upon present and past information
React	to give a response
Reference	to cite specific information from a passage to support a viewpoint
Represent/Show/Model	to symbolize or change the form, but not the substance, of the information
Select	to make a choice or selection
Solve	to work out a correct solution (to a problem)
State	to declare; to set forth in words
Summarize	to combine information efficiently and succinctly into a cohesive statement

Evaluation Terms

About/Approximately	almost the same as, close to, but not equal to, i.e., used in estimation items in mathematics
Best	an evaluative term meaning exceeding all others in terms of quality and correctness
Except	with the exclusion of; but; to leave out; exclude
Least/Least Likely	an evaluative term meaning lowest in rank or importance; meaning smallest in degree or magnitude
Mainly	an evaluative term meaning greatest in number, quantity, size, or degree
Most/Most Likely	an evaluative term meaning the principal or most important part or point

Other Terms

Details	individual parts of a whole; details add substance to a response
Double-Stacking	the process of writing or printing words or sentences on top of each other on one printed line. Double-stacking is <u>not</u> permitted during the administration of state writing tests.
Evidence	information and details presented in a given passage
Example	an instance that serves to illustrate
Fact	that which can be observed or verified; objective
Feature	a characteristic of a passage
Illustration	a picture or drawing
Opinion	a belief or idea held with confidence but not substantiated with direct proof or knowledge
Passage	a piece of material, such as a story, poem, recipe, graph, cartoon, blurb, excerpt
Scenario	an outline or model of an expected or supposed sequence of events