2016–17 NC Check-Ins—ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS/READING GRADE 6 Specification Information

Purpose of the NC Check-Ins (formerly Proof of Concept)
The NC Check-Ins (formerly Proof of Concept) will be administered throughout the school year to provide teachers and parents with immediate feedback for guiding subsequent instruction. The North Carolina State Board of Education will use the results to determine the best course of action for future state assessments.

Sampling Procedure
To ensure results are generalizable to the entire state, an iterative stratified random sampling framework was used to select a representative sample of 111 schools (approximately 15,915 students). Four demographic variables: region, ethnicity, gender, and economically disadvantaged students and one school-level achievement variable: mean-scale score were used to ensure the sample selected is representative of the state.

Eligible Students
All students enrolled in grade 6 (according to PowerSchool) at the sampled schools and who participate in the End-of-Grade (EOG) English Language Arts (ELA)/Reading assessment are expected to participate with or without accommodations in the Grade 6 ELA/Reading NC Check-In. The only exceptions are as follows:

1. students with disabilities who, according to their Individualized Education Program (IEP) documentation, participate in the ***NCEXTEND1*** alternate assessment in accordance with state policies;
2. students identified as English Learners (ELs) who score below Level 4.0 Expanding on the reading subtest of the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W–APT™) and are in their first year in U.S. schools; and
3. in rare cases, students who are granted a medical exception because they are deemed both medically fragile because of a significant medical emergency and/or condition and unable to participate in a specific NC Check-In administration.

Windows and Administration Time

- Local education agencies (LEAs)/charter schools may determine the administration days for each NC Check-In within the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's (NCDPI) designated windows. The windows are as follows:

NC Check-In 1	October 17–November 16, 2016
NC Check-In 2	January 2-31, 2017
NC Check-In 3	March 1–31, 2017

- Students are allowed up to 90 minutes to complete each NC Check-In.

Prioritization of Standards

- The NCDPI/Test Development Section 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 different question types.
- The NC Check-Ins are aligned to the NC *Standard Course of Study* (NC*SCS*) for English Language Arts, adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education in June 2010.
- The NC*SCS* may be reviewed by visiting the NCDPI K-12 English Language Arts wiki site at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/languagearts/.
- The following standards are assessed on each ELA/reading NC Check-In.
    - RL.1, RL.2, RL.3, RL.4, RL.5, L.4.a, L.5.a
    - RI.1, RI.2, RI.3, RI.4, RI.5, RI.6, RI.8
- All students are expected to be able to comprehend texts of steadily increasing complexity as they progress through a grade. Both quantitative and qualitative measures are used to determine the complexity of a text. The qualitative measure of text complexity includes making informed decisions about the difficulty of a text in terms of a number of factors such as levels of meaning or purpose, structure, language conventionality and clarity, and knowledge demands. The text complexity of the selections chosen for the NC Check-Ins study will increase throughout the year.

Delivery Mode and Structure

- The 2016–17 NC Check-Ins will be delivered on paper-and-pencil.
- Each Grade 6 ELA/Reading NC Check-In will contain 20 questions.
- Students will see four-response-option multiple-choice questions. The 2016–17 NC Check-Ins will not include a short-answer constructed response item.
- Each question is worth 1 point.
- Each NC Check-In will include three selections.

NC Check-In	Number of Poetry Selections	Number of Informational Selections	Number of Literature Selections	Approximate Lexile Range for Informational and Literature Selections
NC Check-In 1	1	1	1	880L–980L
NC Check-In 2	0	1	2	900L–1050L
NC Check-In 3	0	2	1	980L–1100L

Scoring and Reporting

- LEA answer sheets will be scanned by the LEA test coordinator. The LEA test coordinator will distribute reports (i.e., class roster, class item report, class subscore report) to schools within five school days.

- Charter schools must package and return answer sheets to the Regional Accountability Coordinator (RAC) for scanning. The RAC will provide reports (i.e., class roster, class item report, class subscore report) to the charter school test coordinator following scanning.
- An individual student report (ISR) for each NC Check-In should be provided to parents within 30 calendar days.

Teacher Access to Test Books

Following the administration of an NC Check-In (i.e., all eligible students at grade 6 have been assessed and any makeup sessions are completed), the NC Check-In student books can be kept at the school for five weeks, after which they are to be securely destroyed/recycled. The NC Check-In student books must be stored at the school in a secure, locked facility that is not accessible to students but is accessible to the teachers. The NC Check-In student books must be accounted for at all times.

The NCDPI recommends that the NC Check-In student books be checked out to the classroom teacher for five weeks so that the teacher has them readily available for review sessions with students and conferences with parents. Teachers must store the books in a locked drawer or cabinet that is not accessible to students. Reproducing or distributing content from the test books or class item reports is not permitted. The NC Check-In student books must remain at the school at all times. Parents can view the students' responses only within the school setting. NC Check-Ins (e.g., books, questions, correct answers) cannot be shared with other schools or teachers who are not participating in the NC Check-Ins.

Resources

- Additional information about the NC Check-Ins (e.g., specification information, sample reports, frequently asked questions, assessment briefs) may be accessed through http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/nccheckins.
- Stakeholders may sign-up for email updates. Go to http://www.ncpublicschools.org/. Click SIGN UP FOR UPDATES (upper left). Follow the directions and click SUBMIT. Under NEWLETTERS, add a check mark beside NC CHECK-INS. Mark other topics of interest. Click SUBMIT.

Developing Assessments

North Carolina educators play an important role in the test development process through writing and reviewing test items. North Carolina professional educators from across the state who have current classroom experience are recruited and trained as item writers and developers for state tests. Diversity among the item writers and their knowledge of the current state-adopted content standards are addressed during recruitment. Trained North Carolina educators also review items and suggest improvements, if necessary. The use of classroom teachers from across the state ensures that instructional validity is maintained. Information about the test development process is available at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/technicalnotes.

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English Language Arts/Reading Grade 6 Specification Information
Document History

Date	Comment	Revision Location	Revision Description
August 29, 2016	Original document posted	N/A	N/A
November 8, 2016	Draft information updated	Delivery Mode and Structure (p. 2)	The approximate Lexile range for informational and literature selections for NC Check-In 3 was marked as DRAFT on the original document. The Lexile range for NC Check-In 3 was updated and DRAFT was removed.
January 23, 2017	Revision	Delivery Mode and Structure (p. 2)	The approximate Lexile range for informational and literature selections for NC Check-In 3 was revised. One selection was replaced due to a sensitivity concern. As a result, the approximate Lexile range was revised to reflect the change. The previous range was 980L–1060L. The revised range is 980L–1100L.