

Assessment Brief



Public Schools of North Carolina • State Board of Education • Howard Lee, Chairman • North Carolina Department of Public Instruction • Janice O. Davis, Interim Officer

2005 Pretest–Grade 3 Reading Comprehension & Mathematics

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2005 North Carolina Pretest–Grade 3

The North Carolina Pretest–Grade 3 is administered to all grade 3 students during the first three weeks of school. The pretest measures a sample of grade 2 reading and mathematics goals and objectives as defined in the North Carolina *Standard Course of Study*. This fall (2005) the pretest will consist of reading comprehension items only. In order for a new mathematics pretest to be developed that matches the 2003 mathematics curriculum, all grade 3 students will also participate in a statewide mathematics field test during the same testing window as the operational pretest of reading comprehension.

Description of the Pretest–Grade 3

The North Carolina Pretest–Grade 3 is a multiple-choice test that mirrors the North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests at grade 3. Although three forms of the pretest are administered at each testing site (i.e., the classroom), all forms are equivalent.

The pretest is used in the determination of growth in student performance during the school year for the school-by-school ABCs Accountability Program. The pretest provides pre-scores for third graders in the accountability model because there is no grade 2 test to provide the pre-data for the growth analysis. Growth is determined by comparing student performance on the grade 3 pretest with student performance on the grade 3 end-of-grade test that is administered the last three weeks of the school year. For the 2005–2006 school year, only reading comprehension will be used to provide the pre-data for growth analysis.

Reading Comprehension

Students will have 72 minutes of actual testing time to complete 32 items in reading comprehension. The grade 3 pretest will assess reading comprehension by having students read both literary and informational selections and then answer questions related to the selections. Knowledge of vocabulary is assessed indirectly through application and understanding of terms within the context of the selections and questions. The reading selections are chosen to reflect the variety of actual reading done by students in and out of the classroom and to reflect reading for various purposes such as literary experience, gaining information, and performing a task. Literary texts include fiction, poetry, drama, and literary nonfiction such as biographies, letters, journals, and essays. Informational texts include content areas (art, science, mathematics, social studies, etc.) and consumer or practical selections (pamphlets, reviews, recipes, how-to, etc.).

Reading Category Information

Four types of items (organized into categories) are on the reading comprehension test: (1) cognition; (2) interpretation; (3) critical stance; and (4) connections.

Cognition: Cognition refers to the initial strategies a reader uses to understand the selection. It is about the purpose and organization of the selection. It considers the text as a whole or in a broad perspective. Cognition requires the reader to apply strategies such as using context clues to determine meaning, summarizing to include main points, and identifying the purpose of text features.

Interpretation: Interpretation requires the reader to develop a more complete understanding of the text. It may ask students to clarify, to explain the significance of, to extend, and/or to adapt ideas/concepts. Interpretation requires the reader to make inferences and generalizations.

Critical Stance: Critical Stance refers to tasks that ask the reader to stand apart from the selection and consider it objectively. Critical stance requires the reader to apply processes such as comparing/contrasting and understanding the impact of literary elements.

Connections: Connections refer to connecting knowledge from the selection with other information and experiences. Connections require the reader to relate the selection to events beyond/outside the selection. In addition, the reader will make associations outside the selection and between selections.

2005 Mathematics Field Test

In addition to the operational grade 3 pretest, a statewide field test of mathematics will be administered to all grade 3 students during the first three weeks of this school year. The field test will measure the 2003 mathematics North Carolina *Standard Course of Study* taught in grade 2.

The grade 3 field test will assess students' abilities in five strands of the mathematics curriculum: (1) number sense and operations, (2) measurement, (3) geometry, (4) data analysis and probability, and (5) algebra. The mathematics field test will require students to interpret information from problems in context in order to generate the appropriate responses to the test questions.

The mathematics field test for the North Carolina Pretest–Grade 3 will be administered in two parts: calculator active and calculator inactive. Students are not allowed to use calculators during the calculator inactive part of the field test. The calculator inactive part of the field test measures mathematics in context to reflect the practical nature of mathematics computation. There are twenty-two items in the calculator inactive part of the field test. Forty-five items are in the calculator active part of the field test. Students are allowed to use calculators during the calculator active part of the field test.

Understanding Scores for the Pretest–Grade 3

Score reports and student scores from the 2005 statewide mathematics field test at grade 3 will not be returned to the schools or school systems. The North Carolina Pretest–Grade 3 reading comprehension test

will be scanned and scored locally; therefore, reports of student scores will be printed soon after scoring and sent to schools for distribution to parents. Three types of scores are reported in each subject area for the reading comprehension test: (1) developmental scale scores, (2) percentiles, and (3) achievement levels.

Developmental Scale Scores

The number of questions a student answers correctly is called a raw score. For the grade 3 pretest, the raw score is converted to a developmental scale score. The developmental scale score may be used to measure growth in reading achievement from year to year. The developmental scale score on the grade 3 pretest, given the first three weeks of school, and the developmental scale score on the end-of-grade test, given during the last three weeks of school, allows parents and teachers to measure a student's growth in reading.

Percentiles

The percentile compares the student's performance on the test this year to all North Carolina students who took the test in the norming year. The norming year for a test is generally the first year the test was administered. The percentile indicates that the student performed at a level equal to or better than the stated percentage of students who took the test during the norming year. The higher the percentile, the better a student performed compared to other students in his or her grade. Percentiles range from 1 to 99.

Achievement Levels

Achievement levels are predetermined performance standards that allow the student's performance to be compared to grade-level expectations. Four Achievement Levels are reported in reading comprehension. A complete listing of the Achievement Levels for the grade 3 pretest may be found at:

<http://www.ncpublicschool.org/accountability/testing>.

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