

NorthStar: Preparing English Learners to Succeed on State Tests

Dear Teacher,

As you know, *NorthStar* helps your students learn, practice and master many essential skills. We know that in order to succeed at the secondary level, English learners must not only gain proficiency in English and competency in several academic areas, but they face rigorous state achievement tests. In addition, exit exams are increasingly becoming part of earning a diploma.

We have designed this Skills Sampler Snapshot to demonstrate how *NorthStar* helps prepare your students to tackle test items. The table contains ten essential test skills, located in the far left column. We selected these particular skills because they are included on state tests around the country and because these skills are part of the fundamental language and literacy competencies you develop each day in your EL classrooms.

In the second column, you will find the name of a state test that tests each skill, followed by links to sample test items. Sample test items from Florida (FCAT), New York (NYSESLAT and Regents), California (CAHSEE), and New Jersey (HSPA) are represented.

In the far right column you will find a correlation with activities from *NorthStar* Reading and Writing books. This correlation is not comprehensive by any means; it is merely a snapshot of the way in which *NorthStar* helps secondary English learners achieve success on state tests.

If you have questions about this table or about the *NorthStar* series, please contact your local Pearson Longman Representative. We would be happy to help you in any way we can.



Skill Definitions:

- 1. Infer Word Meaning from Context:** Context is the words and sentences that come before and after a particular word that help you understand the meaning of an unknown word. Information conveyed by the other words in a sentence or paragraph act as context clues which can help you guess, or infer, the meaning of an unfamiliar word.
- 2. Compare and Contrast Within or Across Texts:** When you make a comparison within a text, such as comparing two characters, or when you make comparisons between two different texts, you look for ways in which they are similar. When you contrast within or across texts, you look for ways in which they are not alike, or dissimilar.
- 3. Identify organizational pattern of a text or listening passage:** Organizational pattern, or rhetorical structure, refers to the relationships among facts and ideas in different parts of a spoken or written passage. Possible patterns include: cause/effect, order of importance, chronological order, spatial order, description, classification, comparison and contrast, and persuasion.
- 4. Study a graph to discern information:** Unlike in a written passage, information in a graph is represented visually. For students to effectively discern information from a graph, they must be able to recognize the graph format, such as a bar graph, and be familiar with basic graphing principles, such as how to read along the X and Y axes to find answers to questions.
- 5. Read for details:** In any well-written expository text, a main idea is bolstered by supporting or relevant details. The details are specific information that relate to the main idea of a paragraph or text. The information conveyed in supporting details develops the main idea and helps a reader further understand what an author is trying to say.
- 6. Demonstrate knowledge of writing conventions:** Writing conventions include punctuation, spelling, grammar and usage, capitalization, and paragraphing.
- 7. Make inferences when reading narrative text:** Making an inference requires making a guess or prediction or drawing a conclusion about something not directly stated in a text. To make an inference about something, such as a character's point of view, you analyze what is directly stated in the text and make an educated guess based on the information.
- 8. Write a persuasive letter:** The purpose of a persuasive letter is to persuade, or convince, the reader that your point of view is correct. You must support your position with evidence or examples.
- 9. Read for Main Idea/Theme:** The main idea is the essential message or most important point in a text. You can describe the main idea of an essay or of a shorter piece of writing, such as a paragraph. The main idea of an expository text is usually expressed in a thesis statement (in an essay) or topic sentence (in a paragraph). In literature, main ideas are called themes and are usually not directly expressed.
- 10. Write a persuasive essay:** The purpose of a persuasive essay is to persuade, or convince, the reader that your point of view is correct. This kind of essay is also called an opinion essay. You must take a position and then support the position with evidence or examples.

SKILLS SAMPLER SNAPSHOT*

Skill	Test	Source	NorthStar Reading/Writing Sample Correlations
Infer word meaning from context	FCAT	http://www.firn.edu/dae/sas/fcat/pdf/fc0rib1r.pdf Question 1 (what does <i>maxims</i> mean?)	Introductory p. 124, Vocab for Comprehension Intermediate p. 21, Vocab for Comprehension
Compare and contrast within or across texts	FCAT	http://www.firn.edu/dae/sas/fcat/pdf/fc0rib1r.pdf Question 7, Read Think, Explain (how are Doris and her mother similar?)	High-Int p. 77, Linking Readings One and Two, Exercises 1 and 2 Basic p. 66, Linking Readings One and Two
Identify organizational pattern of text or listening passage	NY REGENTS	http://www.nysedregents.org/testing/engre/1-805.pdf Page 4, Question 6 (predominant organizational pattern of account)	Introductory pp. 83-84, Style: Describing a Place using Spatial Order Intermediate pp. 47-48, Style: Summary Writing, Exercise 2 High-Int. pp. 106-107, Style: Cause and Effect, Exercises 1 and 2
Study a graph to discern information	NY REGENTS	http://www.nysedregents.org/testing/engre/1-805.pdf Page 9, Questions 15 and 16 (According to the graph....etc.)	Introductory p. 107 (graph and questions) Basic pp. 2-3, Background
Read for details	NYESLAT	http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/nyseslat/sampler06/9-12bk.pdf Page 8, Questions 2 and 3	Introductory, p. 55, Reading for Details Basic, p. 24, Reading for Details
Demonstrate knowledge of writing conventions	NYESLAT	http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/nyseslat/sampler06/9-12bk.pdf Page 10, Questions 4 and 5	Introductory p. 16, Exercise 2 Basic, p. 94, Exercises 2 and 3

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Skill	Test	Source	NorthStar Reading/Writing Sample Correlations
Make inferences when reading narrative text	NJ HSPA	<p>http://www.njpep.org/assessment/hspa/hspa_la/module_4/reading_narrative_a.htm</p> <p>Sample Narrative Text/Question Sample A</p> <p>When the billionaire states, "But they say that the people are never satisfied. There are always odd characters who want still more..." it can be said that he is describing...</p> <p>http://www.njpep.org/assessment/hspa/hspa_la/module_4/reading_narrative_b.htm</p> <p>Sample Narrative Text/Question Sample B</p> <p>When the sniper begins to "gibber to himself, cursing the war, cursing himself, cursing everybody," he probably...</p>	<p>Intermediate pp. 61-62, Reacting to the Reading Exercises 1 and 2</p> <p>Advanced p. 57, Reacting to the Reading, Exercise 1</p>
Write to persuade (persuasive letter)	NJ HSPA	<p>http://www.njpep.org/assessment/hspa/hspa_la/module_2/persuade_prompt_c.htm</p> <p>Sample Persuasive Writing Prompt C</p>	<p>Basic pp. 69-70, pp. 74-75 (Research Topic)</p> <p>High-Intermediate p. 11, p.124</p>
Read for Main Idea/Theme	CAHSEE	<p>http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/documents/rtqela05rpt1.pdf</p> <p>Question 33 (page 30)</p> <p>Question 50 (page 39)</p>	<p>Basic p. 106, Reading for Main Idea</p> <p>Introductory, p. 110, Reading for Main Idea</p>
Write to persuade (persuasive essay)	CAHSEE	<p>http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/documents/eng05sec6.pdf</p>	<p>Intermediate pp. 105-107, Writing an Opinion Essay</p> <p>High-Intermediate pp. 63-65, Opinion Essays (include writing topics but not research topics)</p>

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