



New Mexico

Teacher Assessments™

Study Guide

New Mexico Content Knowledge Assessments™

23 Middle Level Language Arts



Table of Contents

An Overview of the Testing Program	1
Test Development Process	2
Characteristics of the Assessments	2
Test Administration	4
Score Reports	4
Test Scores	4
How to Prepare for the Assessments	5
Plan Your Course of Study	5
The Day of the Test: Helpful Hints	7
Preparing for the Test Administration	7
Test-Taking Tips	7
An Introduction to the New Mexico Content Knowledge	
Assessment of Middle Level Language Arts	10
Test Framework	11
Sample Test Directions	17
Sample Selected-Response Questions	18
Answer Key for the Sample Selected-Response Questions.....	22

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An Overview of the Testing Program, How to Prepare for the Assessments, and the Day of the Test: Helpful Hints

The first three sections of the study guide are available in a separate PDF file. Click the link below to view or print these sections.

[An Overview of the Testing Program, How to Prepare for the Assessments, and the Day of the Test:
Helpful Hints](#)



An Introduction to the New Mexico Content Knowledge Assessment of Middle Level Language Arts

The New Mexico Content Knowledge Assessments are designed to measure the subject matter knowledge and skills that are needed to teach effectively in New Mexico schools. This assessment is intended as an option for elementary K–8 teachers to establish that they are “highly qualified” under the “No Child Left Behind” legislation. The Middle Level Language Arts test may not be taken to obtain a secondary license endorsement.

The Middle Level Language Arts test consists of 100 selected-response questions.



Test Framework

Listening and Speaking
Writing
Reading
Literature
Language and Media

SUBAREA I—LISTENING AND SPEAKING

0001 Understand listening for various purposes, including information and understanding, literary response and expression, personal appreciation and entertainment, and interactions in a variety of formal and informal situations.

For example:

- analyze factors affecting a listener's ability to listen effectively and to construct meaning from oral messages in a variety of listening situations (e.g., using prior knowledge, recognizing transitions, interpreting nonverbal cues, using note taking and outlining)
- recognize appropriate listening strategies for given contexts and purposes (e.g., interpreting information that is presented orally, appreciating literary texts that are read aloud)
- demonstrate knowledge of techniques for effective listening in conversation and in small- and large-group situations (e.g., oral history, story telling)
- demonstrate knowledge of instructional strategies for helping students use effective listening strategies in a variety of contexts

0002 Understand speaking for various purposes, including information and understanding, literary response and expression, personal appreciation and entertainment, and interactions in a variety of formal and informal situations.

For example:

- analyze how features of spoken language (e.g., word choice, rate, pitch, tone, volume) and nonverbal cues (e.g., body language, visual aids, facial expressions) affect a speaker's ability to communicate
- recognize elements of effective speaking in situations involving people of different ages, genders, cultures, and other personal characteristics
- recognize language conventions for different social situations (e.g., informal conversations, job interviews, workplace interactions)
- apply knowledge of techniques for effective speaking in conversation and in small- and large-group situations
- demonstrate knowledge of instructional strategies for helping students use elements of effective speaking in a variety of contexts

SUBAREA II—WRITING

0003 Understand processes for generating, drafting, revising, editing, and presenting written texts and the methods for assessing and improving student writing.

For example:

- understand prewriting activities (e.g., oral conversations, listing, brainstorming, clustering, using graphic organizers)
- understand effective techniques of note taking, outlining, and drafting
- understand how to evaluate and synthesize information from various sources (e.g., primary sources including oral histories, the Internet, encyclopedias, news magazines) for use in research projects
- recognize methods of revising works in progress (e.g., self-assessments, peer response groups, teacher conferences)
- understand how to edit drafts to correct errors in usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling
- apply knowledge of multiple techniques for assessing students' writing (e.g., individual conferences, portfolios, use of rubrics, holistic and analytic scoring) and for providing instruction in writing on an ongoing basis

0004 Understand and apply writing skills and strategies for various purposes, including information, understanding and analysis, personal expression, and social interaction.

For example:

- identify methods for providing authentic, relevant writing opportunities for diverse students (e.g., response to reading, personal experiences)
- assess the appropriateness of vocabulary, language, formats, and organizational patterns when writing for various audiences and purposes
- recognize methods used to improve the effectiveness of expository writing
- demonstrate awareness of the aesthetic dimension of language (e.g., imagery, figurative language, sentence variety)
- analyze the effectiveness of narrative, descriptive, and persuasive methods and materials in writing for personal expression and social interaction
- identify strategies for promoting the writing skills of English language learners

SUBAREA III—READING

0005 Understand the use of word identification strategies and methods for promoting vocabulary development for all students.

For example:

- identify instructional strategies and activities for helping students develop rapid, automatic decoding and reading fluency
- identify instructional strategies and activities for helping students apply word identification strategies in addition to phonics (e.g., structural analysis, use of context clues)
- apply knowledge of instructional strategies and activities for promoting vocabulary development (e.g., reading and listening to a wide variety of texts, word classification, semantic mapping)
- recognize criteria for selecting appropriate vocabulary words for study (e.g., words that are related to one another, words needed to comprehend a reading selection)
- identify strategies for promoting the vocabulary knowledge and skills of English language learners

0006 Understand the use of reading comprehension strategies.

For example:

- understand major theories and research regarding factors that affect reading comprehension (e.g., reading rate and fluency, word recognition, prior knowledge and experiences, schema theory, vocabulary)
- understand literal comprehension skills (e.g., identifying the sequence of events, identifying explicitly stated main ideas, details, and cause-and-effect patterns in a text)
- understand inferential comprehension skills (e.g., the ability to draw conclusions or generalizations from a text and to infer ideas and cause-and-effect relationships that are not explicitly stated in a text)
- apply strategies before, during, and after reading to enhance comprehension, including strategies for helping students monitor their own reading comprehension (e.g., developing and activating prior knowledge, connecting texts to personal experience, previewing a text, making predictions about a text, using K-W-L charts and other graphic organizers, taking notes on a text, discussing a text, using self-questioning, using think-alouds)
- understand formal and informal methods for assessing students' reading comprehension and their use of comprehension strategies
- understand techniques for promoting the reading comprehension skills and strategies of students from diverse social and cultural backgrounds

0007 Understand reading for various purposes, including information and understanding, literary response and personal enjoyment, and critical analysis and evaluation.

For example:

- recognize an author's purpose for writing and how to vary reading strategies for different texts and purposes (e.g., skimming, scanning, in-depth reading, rereading) and for different types and genres of written communication (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, poetry)
- apply knowledge of strategies for helping students identify and analyze common text structures (e.g., chronological, compare-and-contrast, cause-and-effect)
- analyze information from texts containing tables, charts, graphs, maps, and illustrations
- understand how to locate, gather, interpret, synthesize, and evaluate information from a variety of printed texts and electronic sources
- apply knowledge of strategies for promoting students' literary response skills orally and in writing (e.g., connecting the text to personal, social, and cultural experiences, prior knowledge, and other texts; analyzing an author's use of language; citing evidence from the text to support an interpretation; using literature circles or literature response journals)
- understand how to distinguish fact from opinion in a selection and how to evaluate the relevance, importance, or sufficiency of facts or examples in a writer's argument

0008 Understand strategies for promoting students' independent reading.

For example:

- apply knowledge of strategies for expanding students' experiences with diverse literatures and encouraging them to be lifelong readers
- identify appropriate methods for determining students' reading interests and helping them develop selection criteria for independent reading
- identify strategies for selecting and organizing a range of reading materials (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, drama, reference) at various levels of difficulty for all students, including English language learners
- understand how to collaborate and communicate with colleagues, parents, caregivers, and community members to promote students' literacy development (e.g., conferences, school-wide programs such as open house, job fairs, school/business collaborations, student internships)

SUBAREA IV—LITERATURE

0009 Understand characteristic features of various genres of literature and historical, social, and cultural aspects of literature.

For example:

- apply strategies for teaching students characteristic features of various genres of literature (e.g., novel, drama, biography, essay, poetry)
- understand techniques of literary analysis (e.g., describing and analyzing story elements, determining mood and theme, analyzing the use of figurative language)
- understand historical, social, and cultural aspects of literature, including the ways in which literary works and movements reflect and shape culture and history

0010 Understand significant themes, characteristics, trends, writers, and works in American and world literatures, as well as literature written for children and adolescents.

For example:

- understand significant themes, characteristics, trends, writers, and works in American literature and world literatures from diverse time periods and cultures
- analyze universal themes and patterns in the literature and other non-written traditions of diverse cultures
- examine the expression of cultural values and ideas (e.g., regional, ethnic, historical) through literature

0011 Understand major themes, characteristics, trends, writers, and works in the literature of the Southwest.

For example:

- recognize major literary forms, works, and writers of the Southwest
- analyze the literary response of writers in the Southwest to social conditions, historical events, and cultural movements
- recognize ways in which literature reflects the cultural pluralism of the Southwest and may help students appreciate themselves and others

SUBAREA V—LANGUAGE AND MEDIA

0012 Understand the history, structure, acquisition, and use of language.

For example:

- understand the history and diversity of language, including regional, cultural, and social varieties
- understand developmental theories of language acquisition, including the acquisition of English as a first and second language
- recognize structural features of language (e.g., phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic) and understand how the grammar system functions in oral and written language

0013 Understand the interrelationship of language arts skills and their integration into other content areas.

For example:

- recognize ways in which reading, writing, listening, speaking, thinking, and viewing interrelate and mutually influence one another
- apply knowledge of methods for integrating language modes to promote learning
- apply knowledge of strategies for integrating the language arts with other content areas

0014 Understand the use of visual and electronic media to inform, entertain, express creativity, and influence attitudes and behavior.

For example:

- recognize characteristics and uses of various media (e.g., film, television, computer graphics, the Internet, CD-ROM)
- understand how to use computers and other technology to locate, organize, and present information
- analyze ways in which advertisers seek to influence popular behavior
- examine the impact of visual and electronic media on social attitudes
- understand how to evaluate and select appropriate print and electronic visual materials for a given purpose and audience



Sample Test Directions

A sample of the general directions for the New Mexico Content Knowledge Assessment of Middle Level Language Arts is shown in the box below.

You should have in front of you:

- (1) a test booklet for the assessment for which you registered (check the assessment name on the front cover);
- (2) an Answer Sheet A; and
- (3) a No. 2 lead pencil.

IF YOU ARE MISSING ANY OF THESE MATERIALS, NOTIFY YOUR TEST ADMINISTRATOR. REMOVE ALL OTHER MATERIALS FROM YOUR DESK.

TEST DIRECTIONS

Each question in this booklet is a selected-response question with four answer choices. Read each question carefully and choose the ONE best answer. Record your answer on Answer Sheet A in the space that corresponds to the question number. Completely fill in the circle having the same letter as the answer you have chosen. *Use only a No. 2 lead pencil.*

Sample Question:

1. What is the capital of New Mexico?
 - A. Albuquerque
 - B. Las Cruces
 - C. Santa Fe
 - D. Silver City

The correct answer to this question is C. You would indicate that on Answer Sheet A as follows:

1. A B C D

Try to answer all questions. Even if you are unsure of an answer, it is better to guess than not to answer a question at all. You will NOT be penalized for guessing.

You may use the margins of the test booklet for scratch paper, but all of your answers must be recorded on the answer sheet. Answers that are in the test booklet will not be scored.

The words "End of Test" indicate that you have completed the test. You may go back and review your work, and be sure you have answered all questions before raising your hand for dismissal. Your test materials must be returned to a test administrator when you finish the test.

FOR TEST SECURITY REASONS, YOU MAY NOT TAKE NOTES OR REMOVE ANY OF THE TEST MATERIALS FROM THE ROOM.

This testing session will last four hours. You may work at your own pace. If you have any questions, please ask them now before beginning the test.



DO NOT GO ON UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.



Sample Selected-Response Questions

This section presents sample selected-response questions for you to review as part of your preparation for the New Mexico Content Knowledge Assessment of Middle Level Language Arts. To demonstrate how the test competencies may be assessed, each sample question is preceded by the competency that it measures. On an actual test, the competencies will not be given.

The sample selected-response questions are designed to illustrate the nature of the test questions. They should not be used as a diagnostic tool to determine your individual strengths and weaknesses. The selected-response questions require you to demonstrate more than the ability to recall factual information. They ask you to think critically about the information, to analyze it, to consider it carefully, or to apply it to a hypothetical situation.

Work through each question carefully before referring to the answer key, which is located at the end of the section.

Competency 0002

Understand speaking for various purposes, including information and understanding, literary response and expression, personal appreciation and entertainment, and interactions in a variety of formal and informal situations.

1. Which of the following activities is likely to be most effective in promoting the oral communication skills of eighth-grade students?
 - A. Students select passages from historic speeches and take turns reading the passages aloud with appropriate expression.
 - B. Students learn about debating techniques and then participate in a class debate on an issue in which students are interested.
 - C. Students participate in a Readers' Theatre performance of a high-interest story for young adults that all students have read.
 - D. Students watch a video of a famous speech and then write a brief essay explaining why the speech was effective.

Competency 0003

Understand processes for generating, drafting, revising, editing, and presenting written texts and the methods for assessing and improving student writing.

2. A middle school teacher meets with students in individual conferences to help them revise a draft essay. For each conference, the teacher begins by highlighting a positive aspect of the student's draft. The conference is likely to be most effective if the teacher takes which of the following steps *next*?
 - A. The teacher paraphrases the main ideas that the draft appears to convey and encourages the student to respond and elaborate.
 - B. The teacher helps the student edit the draft to correct errors in usage and to conform to written language conventions.
 - C. The teacher identifies the weakest aspect of the draft and explains how the student could revise the draft to eliminate this weakness.
 - D. The teacher guides the student to create and discuss an outline of the draft's main ideas and significant details.

Competency 0005

Understand the use of word identification strategies and methods for promoting vocabulary development for all students.

3. Structural analysis is likely to be most effective in helping a reader identify which of the following words?
- A. gossamer
 - B. heresy
 - C. fibula
 - D. irredeemable

Competency 0006

Understand the use of reading comprehension strategies.

4. Which of the following instructional activities for fifth-grade students is likely to be most effective in improving their inferential comprehension skills?
- A. Students silently read a nonfiction passage and then work with a partner to create and discuss an outline of the passage.
 - B. The teacher pauses periodically while reading aloud a story and prompts students to make and discuss predictions about the story.
 - C. Students silently read a short story and then work in small groups to identify and discuss the story's plot and characters.
 - D. The teacher guides students to analyze a nonfiction text by helping them create a semantic map of the text after reading it.

Competency 0007

Understand reading for various purposes, including information and understanding, literary response and personal enjoyment, and critical analysis and evaluation.

5. A middle school language arts teacher uses a variety of reader response activities (e.g., discussion, literature circles, journaling) to develop students' literary response skills. In addition to increasing students' personal engagement with literary texts, these activities are most likely to promote students' reading development in which of the following ways?
- A. Students learn how fiction and other genres of literary texts differ from informational or persuasive reading materials.
 - B. Students become more skilled in distinguishing classic literature from popular reading materials that have less literary merit.
 - C. Students learn how to identify the correct interpretation of a literary text by applying critical-thinking skills.
 - D. Students become more aware of their own reading strategies and more responsible for self-monitoring their comprehension.

Competency 0011

Understand major themes, characteristics, trends, writers, and works in the literature of the Southwest.

6. Which of the following is a significant theme shared by Navajo, Zuni, and Hopi creation myths?
 - A. the role of universal moral laws in governing human conduct
 - B. the importance of collective effort to attain long-term goals
 - C. the role of patience in overcoming obstacles
 - D. the importance of living in balance with the natural world

Competency 0012

Understand the history, structure, acquisition, and use of language.

7. Which of the following factors contributed most significantly to the expansion of the English language during the English Renaissance of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?
 - A. the creation of descriptive compound words by joining two native words together
 - B. the infusion of borrowed words from Latin and Greek
 - C. the inclusion of Scandinavian words derived from the language of Danish settlers
 - D. the addition of words that were shortened by common usage

Competency 0014

Understand the use of visual and electronic media to inform, entertain, express creativity, and influence attitudes and behavior.

8. A significant benefit of having students use hypermedia tools to create documents is that hypermedia tools:
 - A. provide a fixed framework for presenting information in a linear sequence.
 - B. help students connect newly learned information to prior knowledge.
 - C. allow the user to organize, display, and interact with information in a variety of ways.
 - D. provide students with thorough instructions for navigating through linked information.



Answer Key for the Sample Selected-Response Questions

1. B
2. A
3. D
4. B
5. D
6. D
7. B
8. C