Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure®

TEST INFORMATION BOOKLET

90 Foundations of Reading

MA-SG-FLD090-04

Massachusetts Department of Education

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(Field 90)

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Test Overview Chart:
Foundations of Reading (90)

Subareas	Approximate Number of Multiple-Choice Items	Number of Open-Response Items
I. Foundations of Reading Development	43–45	
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The Foundations of Reading test is designed to assess the candidate's knowledge of reading/language arts required for the Massachusetts Early Childhood, Elementary, and Moderate Disabilities licenses. This subject matter knowledge is delineated in the Massachusetts Department of Education's *Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval* (7/2001), 603 CMR 7.06 "Subject Matter Knowledge Requirements for Teachers."

The Foundations of Reading test assesses the candidate's proficiency and depth of understanding of the subject of reading and writing development based on the requirement that the candidate has participated in seminars or courses that address the teaching of reading. Candidates are typically nearing completion of or have completed their undergraduate work when they take the test.

The multiple-choice items on the test cover the subareas as indicated in the chart above. The open-response items may relate to topics covered in any of the subareas and will typically require breadth of understanding of the field and the ability to relate concepts from different aspects of the field. Responses to the open-response items are expected to be appropriate and accurate in the application of subject matter knowledge, to provide high-quality and relevant supporting evidence, and to demonstrate a soundness of argument and understanding of the field.

Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure™

**FIELD 90: FOUNDATIONS OF READING
TEST OBJECTIVES**

Subarea

Multiple-Choice	Range of Objectives	Approximate Test Weighting
I. Foundations of Reading Development	01–04	35%
II. Development of Reading Comprehension	05–07	27%
III. Reading Assessment and Instruction	08–09	<u>18%</u>
		80%

Open-Response		
IV. Integration of Knowledge and Understanding	10	**20%**

SUBAREAS:

FOUNDATIONS OF READING DEVELOPMENT
DEVELOPMENT OF READING COMPREHENSION
READING ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTION
INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

FOUNDATIONS OF READING DEVELOPMENT   [35%]

0001   Understand phonological and phonemic awareness.

For example: the distinction between phonological awareness (i.e., the awareness that oral language is composed of smaller units, such as spoken words and syllables) and phonemic awareness (i.e., a specific type of phonological awareness involving the ability to distinguish the separate phonemes in a spoken word); the role of phonological awareness and phonemic awareness in reading development; the difference between phonemic awareness and phonics skills; levels of phonological and phonemic awareness skills (e.g., rhyming, segmenting, blending, deleting, substituting); strategies (e.g., explicit, implicit) to promote phonological and phonemic awareness (e.g., distinguishing spoken words, syllables, onsets/rimes, phonemes); and the role of phonological processing in the reading development of individual students (e.g., English Language Learners, struggling readers through highly proficient readers).

0002   Understand concepts of print and the alphabetic principle.

For example: development of the understanding that print carries meaning; strategies for promoting awareness of the relationship between spoken and written language; the role of environmental print in developing print awareness; development of book handling skills; strategies for promoting an understanding of the directionality of print; techniques for promoting the ability to track print in connected text; strategies for promoting letter knowledge (e.g., skill in recognizing and naming uppercase and lowercase letters); letter formation; strategies for promoting understanding of the alphabetic principle (i.e., the recognition that phonemes are represented by letters and letter pairs); use of reading and writing strategies for teaching letter-sound correspondence; and development of alphabetic knowledge in individual students (e.g., English Language Learners, struggling readers through highly proficient readers).

0003   Understand the role of phonics in promoting reading development.

For example: explicit and implicit strategies for teaching phonics; the role of phonics in developing rapid, automatic word recognition; the relationship between decoding and reading comprehension; the interrelationship between letter-sound correspondence and beginning decoding (e.g., blending letter sounds); strategies for helping students decode single-syllable words that follow common patterns (e.g., CVC, CVCC, CVVC, CVCe) and multisyllable words; methods for promoting and assessing the use of phonics generalizations to decode words in connected text; use of semantic and syntactic cues to help decode words; the relationship between decoding and encoding (e.g., analyzing the spellings of beginning readers to assess phonics knowledge, using spelling instruction to reinforce phonics skills); the relationship between oral vocabulary and the process of decoding written words; specific terminology associated with phonics (e.g., phoneme, morpheme, consonant digraph, consonant blend); and development of phonics skills in individual students (e.g., English Language Learners, struggling readers through highly proficient readers).

0004 Understand word analysis skills and strategies.

For example: development of word analysis skills and strategies in addition to phonics, including structural analysis; the relationship between word analysis skills and reading comprehension; identification of common morphemes (e.g., base words, roots, inflections and other affixes); recognition of common prefixes (e.g., un-, re-, pre-) and suffixes (e.g., -tion, -able) and their meanings; knowledge of Latin and Greek roots that form English words; use of syllabication as a word identification strategy; analysis of syllables and morphemes in relation to spelling patterns; techniques for identifying compound words; identification of homographs (i.e., words that are spelled the same but have different meanings and may be pronounced differently [e.g., *bow*, part of a ship/*bow*, to bend from the waist; *tear*, a drop of water from the eye/*tear*, to rip]); use of context cues (e.g., semantic, syntactic) to help identify words and to verify the pronunciation and meaning of words; and development of word analysis skills in individual students (e.g., English Language Learners, struggling readers through highly proficient readers).

DEVELOPMENT OF READING COMPREHENSION   [27%]

0005 Understand vocabulary development.

For example: the relationship between oral and written vocabulary development and reading comprehension; the role of systematic, noncontextual vocabulary strategies (e.g., grouping words based on conceptual categories and associative meanings) and contextual vocabulary strategies (e.g., paraphrasing); the relationship between oral vocabulary and the process of identifying and understanding written words; strategies for promoting oral language development and listening comprehension (e.g., read-alouds, word explanation strategies); knowledge of common sayings, proverbs, and idioms (e.g., raining cats and dogs, better safe than sorry); knowledge of foreign words and abbreviations commonly used in English (e.g., RSVP); criteria for selecting vocabulary words; strategies for clarifying and extending a reader's understanding of unfamiliar words encountered in connected text (e.g., use of semantic and syntactic cues, use of word maps, use of the dictionary); strategies for promoting comprehension across the curriculum by expanding knowledge of content-area vocabulary (e.g., focus on key words); the importance of frequent, extensive, varied reading experiences in vocabulary development; and development of vocabulary knowledge and skills in individual students (e.g., English Language Learners, struggling readers through highly proficient readers).

0006 **Understand how to apply reading comprehension skills and strategies to imaginative/literary texts.**

> For example: knowledge of reading as a process to construct meaning; knowledge of levels of reading comprehension (i.e., literal, inferential, and evaluative) and strategies for promoting comprehension of imaginative/literary texts at all three levels; development of literary response skills (e.g., connecting elements in a text to prior knowledge and other sources, using evidence from a text to support responses); development of literary analysis skills (e.g., identifying features of different literary genres, analyzing story elements, analyzing character development, interpreting figurative language, identifying literary allusions, analyzing the author's point of view); use of comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading (e.g., predicting, visualizing, reviewing, self-monitoring and other metacognitive strategies); use of oral language activities to promote comprehension (e.g., retelling, discussing); the role of oral reading fluency in facilitating comprehension; use of writing activities to promote literary response and analysis (e.g., creation of story maps and other relevant graphic organizers); and development of the reading comprehension skills and strategies of individual students (e.g., English Language Learners, struggling readers through highly proficient readers).

0007 **Understand how to apply reading comprehension skills and strategies to informational/ expository texts.**

> For example: knowledge of levels of reading comprehension (i.e., literal, inferential, and evaluative) and strategies for promoting comprehension of informational/expository texts at all three levels; strategies for identifying point of view, distinguishing facts from opinions, and detecting faulty reasoning in informational/expository texts; use of reading strategies for different texts and purposes (e.g., adjusting reading rate based on text difficulty, skimming/scanning); use of comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading (e.g., predicting, visualizing, self-questioning, paraphrasing); use of oral language activities to promote comprehension (e.g., oral preview/review); the role of oral reading fluency in facilitating comprehension of informational/expository texts; use of writing activities to promote comprehension (e.g., student-generated questioning, note taking, outlining, summarizing, semantic maps, K-W-L charts); knowledge of text structures (e.g., chronological, comparison/contrast, cause/effect); use of text features (e.g., index, glossary), graphic features (e.g., charts, maps), and reference materials; application of comprehension strategies to electronic texts; development of students' ability to apply reading comprehension skills for varied purposes; and development of the reading comprehension skills and strategies of individual students (e.g., English Language Learners, struggling readers through highly proficient readers).

READING ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTION   [18%]

0008   Understand formal and informal methods for assessing reading development.

> For example: the use of data and ongoing reading assessment to adjust instruction to meet students' reading needs; the characteristics and uses of standardized criterion-referenced and norm-referenced tests to assess reading development and identify reading difficulties; concepts of validity, reliability, and bias in testing; the characteristics and uses of formal and informal reading-related assessments (e.g., assessment of phonemic awareness, miscue analyses, Informal Reading Inventories, running records, use of rubrics, portfolio assessment, assessment of authentic tasks); characteristics and uses of group versus individual reading assessments; techniques for assessing particular reading skills (e.g., oral or written retellings to assess reading comprehension, dictated word lists to test letter-sound knowledge); awareness of text leveling; awareness of the challenges and supports in a text (e.g., pictures, predictability, decodability); techniques for determining students' independent, instructional, and frustration reading levels; and assessment of the reading development of individual students (e.g., English Language Learners, struggling readers through highly proficient readers).

0009   Understand multiple approaches to reading instruction.

> For example: knowledge of the significant theories, approaches, practices, and programs for developing reading skills and reading comprehension; strategies for planning, organizing, managing, and differentiating reading instruction to support the reading development of all students; adjustment of reading instruction based on ongoing assessment; instructional strategies for promoting development of particular reading skills (e.g., phonemic awareness, phonics skills, word identification, automatic recognition of sight words, vocabulary knowledge); the uses of large-group, small-group, and individualized reading instruction; strategies for selecting and using meaningful reading materials at appropriate levels of difficulty; creation of an environment that promotes love of reading; strategies for promoting independent reading in the classroom and at home; uses of instructional technologies to promote reading development; and awareness of strategies and resources for supporting individual students (e.g., English Language Learners, struggling readers through highly proficient readers).

INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING   [20%]

In addition to answering multiple-choice items, candidates will prepare written responses to questions addressing content from the preceding objectives, which are summarized in the objective and descriptive statement below.

0010   Prepare an organized, developed analysis on a topic related to one or more of the following: foundations of reading development; development of reading comprehension; reading assessment and instruction.

> For example: the role of phonological and phonemic awareness in reading development; development of alphabetic knowledge; role of phonics in developing rapid, automatic word recognition; development of word analysis skills and strategies in addition to phonics, including structural analysis; the relationship between vocabulary development and reading comprehension; use of comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading imaginative/literary texts; knowledge of organizational patterns in informational/expository texts; techniques for assessing particular reading skills; and strategies for planning, organizing, managing, and differentiating reading instruction to support the reading development of all students.

Sample Test Items:
Foundations of Reading (90)
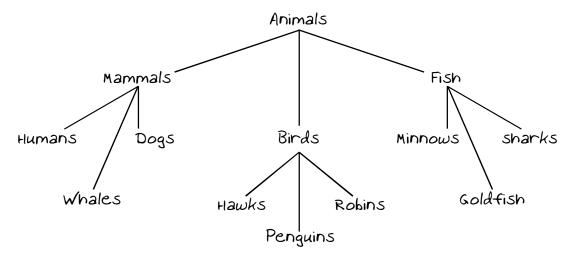
1. Which of the following statements best explains the difference between phonemic awareness and phonics skills?

   A. Phonemic awareness is the general understanding that spoken language can be represented by print, while phonics requires knowledge of particular letter-sound associations.

   B. Phonemic awareness is the ability to associate sounds with letters, while phonics refers to knowledge of common spelling patterns.

   C. Phonemic awareness involves a general understanding of the alphabetic principle, while phonics includes letter-blending skills.

   D. Phonemic awareness is the ability to distinguish individual speech sounds, while phonics requires knowledge of letter-sound correspondence.

2. Which of the following describes the most likely source of phonics difficulties for English Language Learners whose primary language is alphabetic?

   A. Other languages tend to use letter combinations to represent individual phonemes.

   B. The letters of the English alphabet may represent different phonemes in other languages' writing systems.

   C. Other languages rely more heavily on the use of context cues in decoding than English does.

   D. English contains words that have been adopted from many other languages.

3. In which of the following nonsense words is the vowel sound likely to be the same as the vowel sound in the word *on*?

   A. goan

   B. goble

   C. gobb

   D. gowl

4. Students in an upper-elementary class examine and discuss paired words such as *compete* and *competition*, *inflame* and *inflammation*, and *magic* and *magician*. Word pairings such as these are most likely to promote students' reading development by increasing their awareness that:

   A. most phonic generalizations have at least a few exceptions.

   B. syllabication can help a reader identify the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

   C. the spelling of a word may give clues to its meaning as well as to its sound.

   D. some phonemes are represented by more than one letter combination.

5. A fourth-grade teacher leads a class discussion about different types of animals. As students name various animals, the teacher draws on the board the diagram shown below.

This type of activity is most likely to promote students' reading proficiency in which of the following ways?

A. helping them recognize that a word's meaning may shift when the context changes

B. enriching their vocabulary knowledge by relating familiar words to larger conceptual categories

C. helping them recognize that every word has links to many other types of words

D. enriching their vocabulary skills by demonstrating that many single words have both denotative and connotative meanings

Use the information below to answer the two questions that follow.

A fifth-grade student has been reading a novel set in the early nineteenth century. Shown below is an excerpt from a chapter of the novel. In this excerpt, Thomas and his family are travelling across the United States in a covered wagon to settle in California.

As the peaks of the Sierra Nevadas came into view, Thomas began to understand why his parents wanted to make it here earlier in the fall. The mountains were covered in a thick blanket of white. Each time they stopped, Flip jumped out and ran around the wagon, letting out frightened little yelps, as if he knew what lay ahead, and was just as worried as anyone.

Thomas and his parents, and even little Adele, understood that there was no choice but to go on. Here they were in the middle of nowhere—dry desert and more mountains behind them, and nothing, no signs of human life, as far as the eye could see. Everyone in the family stopped talking. There was nothing to talk about, just a heavy fear in the pit of everyone's stomach. Every so often, Thomas's mother or father would disappear into the back of the wagon, checking on the provisions and busying themselves with final preparations for the trip through the pass. Nothing they could do would change the fact that there were five, ten, fifteen feet of snow in some places up there, and more coming.

When the student finishes reading the chapter, the teacher asks questions about this passage. Printed below is an excerpt from their conversation.

Teacher: So what's this chapter about?
Student: Thomas and his family are still trying to get to California. But now they're worried.
Teacher: Why are they worried?
Student: I'm not sure. They're all alone, and it's cold. And there are mountains too, I guess. And they're all feeling sad and scared.
Teacher: What makes them feel that way?
Student: I think maybe they wish they could go back home. Maybe they don't have enough supplies.
Teacher: Do you remember anything else about this part of the story?
Student: Not really . . . nobody's talking about anything.

---

6. In this conversation, the student most clearly demonstrates which of the following reading skills?

    A. making predictions based on information in a passage

    B. understanding the author's point of view in a literary passage

    C. interpreting the mood of a literary text

    D. identifying the main idea of a passage

7. This conversation suggests that the student would benefit from instruction to help the student:

    A. understand cause-and-effect relationships in a literary text.

    B. analyze the development of the main character in a literary text.

    C. identify the sequence of events in a literary text.

    D. recognize the emotional responses of characters in a literary text.

Use the information below to answer the two questions that follow.

Students in a fourth-grade class read the following passage from their science textbook.

> You can sometimes feel static electricity in action. As you take off a sweater over your head, some of the negatively charged particles from the sweater rub onto your hair. This gives your hair extra negative charges, while your sweater is left with extra positive charges. Notice how your hair sticks to the sweater as you pull it over your head.

8. This passage illustrates which of following types of text structure?

    A. comparison and contrast

    B. cause and effect

    C. thesis and evidence

    D. problem and solution

9. Which of the following student responses to the passage most clearly suggests that the student is applying inferential comprehension skills?

    A. "I guess positive charges stick to negative charges."

    B. "My hair always sticks straight up when I take off my sweater."

    C. "I think all my sweaters must have lots of negative charges."

    D. "I think there are other kinds of electricity besides the static kind."

10. **Use the sentences with missing letters below to answer the question that follows.**

   > 1. W_ll   y_ _   r_ _d   th_s?
   >
   > 2. _i_ _   _ou   _ea_   _ _i_?

   Reading researchers have observed that while sentence 1 is easily understood by most readers, sentence 2 is not. This observation best supports which of the following conclusions about effective phonics instruction?

   A. Capitalization and punctuation help determine the meaning of a sentence but are not relevant to decoding.

   B. Students should be encouraged to guess at a word's identity once they have decoded part of the word.

   C. Context cues are as important as phonics knowledge in enabling a reader to decode connected text.

   D. Students' ability to decode connected text will develop most quickly if phonics instruction begins with consonants.

11. **Use the information below to complete the exercise that follows.**

Jonathan, a third-grade student, reads aloud a passage from an unfamiliar story. As he reads, the teacher notes his performance on a separate copy of the story. Printed below is an excerpt from the teacher's record of Jonathan's oral reading performance.

---

          sum-mer
All | summer Karen had | wished for a new bike. She was | tired of | riding her older

              went   *moun-tain*
| sister's | worn-out bike ⟳ What she really wanted was a | sleek, shiny mountain bike

        will   *though*
that would | perform well on the dirt roads and | paths near her house. All through

                            nēg| nīg
the school year she had done | chores for the | neighbors to earn some | extra money.

                      shoe-box were   *ever all-ow-ance*
In May, Karen looked in the | shoebox where she put | half of every | allowance and

                             near-ly any
any | extra money she had \ earned. It was not nearly enough to buy the bike.

        can   *dealing*
What | could she do? Just then Rob | Jones rode by on his bike | delivering the

news-paper   *can deal*
| newspaper. An | idea | popped into Karen's head. Maybe she | could deliver

newspapers herself and \ earn the rest of the money. She would have to get up

                                 some-day
| early and work hard. It might take a long time, but | someday Karen would have

        moun-tain
that shiny | mountain bike!

Key:

⬭ deletion | short pause   ⟵ repetition   ©ᶜ self-correction

∧ insertion || long pause   *cat*/cow substitution

Using your knowledge of **word identification strategies** (e.g., use of phonics, analysis of word structure, use of context clues, identification of sight words), write a response in which you:

• identify one of Jonathan's *strengths* in using word identification strategies; and

• identify one of Jonathan's *weaknesses* in using word identification strategies.

Be sure to cite specific evidence from the information shown to support your response.

Answer Key and Sample Response:
Foundations of Reading (90)

Question Number	Correct Response	Test Objective
1.	**D**	Understand phonological and phonemic awareness.
2.	**B**	Understand the role of phonics in promoting reading development.
3.	**C**	Understand the role of phonics in promoting reading development.
4.	**C**	Understand word analysis skills and strategies.
5.	**B**	Understand vocabulary development.
6.	**C**	Understand how to apply reading comprehension skills and strategies to imaginative/literary texts.
7.	**A**	Understand how to apply reading comprehension skills and strategies to imaginative/literary texts.
8.	**B**	Understand how to apply reading comprehension skills and strategies to informational/expository texts.
9.	**A**	Understand how to apply reading comprehension skills and strategies to informational/expository texts.
10.	**D**	Understand multiple approaches to reading instruction.

The sample response below reflects a strong knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.

> This record of Jonathan's oral reading suggests that one of his word identification strengths is the ability to apply knowledge of word structure. The teacher's notes suggest that Jonathan divides multisyllable words into smaller units to identify them. In some cases the smaller units are syllables (e.g., sum-mer, moun-tain, all-ow-ance). First he uses knowledge of phonics to sound out individual syllables. He is then able to identify the word as a whole. In other cases the smaller units are the two words that make up a compound word. The teacher's notes suggest that Jonathan looks for and recognizes the constituent words that form the compound words shoe-box, news-paper, and some-day.
>
> The teacher's notes also suggest that Jonathan has some weaknesses in word identification. One weakness relates to identification of high-frequency words with irregular spellings. Such words are usually referred to as "sight words." Readers need to learn to recognize these words automatically (i.e., memorize them) because the words cannot be identified by applying common phonics generalizations or by analyzing the word's structure. The passage that Jonathan reads aloud includes a number of these words: <u>what</u>, <u>would</u>, <u>through</u>, <u>where</u>, <u>enough</u>, <u>could</u>. Notice the miscues he makes (without self-correcting) for each of these words: <u>went</u> for <u>what</u>, <u>will</u> for <u>would</u>, <u>though</u> for <u>through</u>, <u>were</u> for <u>where</u>, <u>any</u> for <u>enough</u>, <u>can</u> for <u>could</u>. The word <u>neighbor</u> is also a sight word, and he makes two unsuccessful efforts to decode it by using phonics.