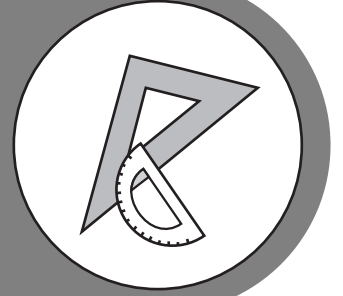


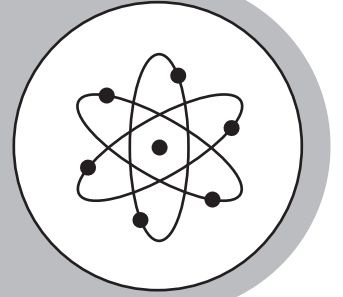
**NINTH GRADE LITERATURE
& COMPOSITION**



Study



Guide



Georgia End-Of-Course Tests

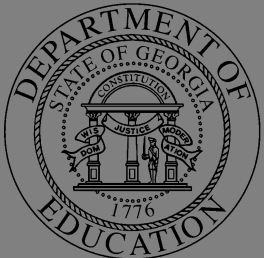


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INTRODUCTION

This study guide is designed to help students prepare to take the Georgia End-of-Course Test (EOCT) for *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition*. This study guide provides information about the EOCT, tips on how to prepare for it, and some suggested strategies students can use to perform their best.

What is the EOCT? The EOCT program was created to improve student achievement through effective instruction and assessment of the material in the state-mandated content standards. The EOCT program helps ensure that all Georgia students have access to rigorous courses that meet high academic expectations. The purpose of the EOCT is to provide diagnostic data that can be used to enhance the effectiveness of schools' instructional programs.

The Georgia End-of-Course Testing program is a result of the A+ Educational Reform Act of 2000, O.C.G.A. §20-2-281. This act requires the Georgia Department of Education to create end-of-course assessments for students in grades nine through twelve for the following core high school subjects:

Mathematics

- Mathematics II: Geometry/Algebra II/Statistics

--OR--

- GPS Geometry

--OR--

- Coordinate Algebra (beginning 2012–2013)
- Analytic Geometry (beginning 2013–2014)

Social Studies

- United States History
- Economics/Business/Free Enterprise

Science

- Biology
- Physical Science

English Language Arts

- Ninth Grade Literature and Composition
- American Literature and Composition

Getting started: The HOW TO USE THE STUDY GUIDE section on page 6 outlines the contents in each section, lists the materials you should have available as you study for the EOCT, and suggests some steps for preparing for the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*.

HOW TO USE THE STUDY GUIDE

This study guide is designed to help you prepare to take the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*. It will give you valuable information about the EOCT, explain how to prepare to take the EOCT, and provide some opportunities to practice for the EOCT. The study guide is organized into three sections. Each section focuses on a different aspect of the EOCT.

The **OVERVIEW OF THE EOCT** section on page 8 gives information about the test, such as dates, time, question format, number of questions, and types of reading passages that will be on the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*. This information can help you better understand the testing situation and what you will be asked to do.

The **PREPARING FOR THE EOCT** section that begins on page 9 provides helpful information on study skills and general test-taking skills and strategies. It explains what you should do before the test to ensure that you are prepared and what you should do during the test to ensure the best test-taking situation possible.

The **TEST CONTENT** section that begins on page 15 explains what the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT* specifically measures. When you know the test content and how you will be asked to demonstrate your knowledge, it will help you be better prepared for the EOCT. This section also contains specific test-taking strategies for successfully answering questions on the EOCT.

With some time, determination, and guided preparation, you will be better prepared to take the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*.



GET IT TOGETHER

In order to make the most of this study guide, you should have the following:

Materials:

- * This study guide
- * Pen or pencil
- * Paper
- * Highlighter

Resources:

- * Dictionary
- * English textbook
- * A teacher or other adult

Study Space:

- * Comfortable (but not too comfortable)
- * Good lighting
- * Minimal distractions
- * Enough work space

Time Commitment:

- * When are you going to study?
- * How long are you going to study?

Determination:

- * Willingness to improve
- * Plan for meeting goals



SUGGESTED STEPS FOR USING THIS STUDY GUIDE

- 1** Familiarize yourself with the structure and purpose of this study guide. (You should have already read the INTRODUCTION and HOW TO USE THE STUDY GUIDE section. Take a few minutes to look through the rest of the study guide to become familiar with how it is arranged.)
- 2** Learn about the test and expectations of performance. (Read OVERVIEW OF THE EOCT.)
- 3** Improve your study skills and test-taking strategies. (Read PREPARING FOR THE EOCT.)
- 4** Learn what the test will assess by studying each domain and the strategies for answering questions that assess the standards in the domain. (Read TEST CONTENT.)
- 5** Answer the sample questions at the end of each domain section. Check your answers against the annotated answers to see how well you did. (See TEST CONTENT.)

OVERVIEW OF THE EOCT

Good test takers understand the importance of knowing as much about a test as possible. This information can help you determine how to study and prepare for the EOCT and how to pace yourself during the test. The box below gives you a “snapshot” of the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT* and other important information.



THE EOCT AT A GLANCE

Administration Dates:

The EOCT has three primary annual testing dates: once in the spring, once in the summer, and once in the winter. There are also mid-month, online tests given in August, September, October, November, February, and March, as well as retest opportunities within the year.

Administration Time:

Each EOCT is composed of two sections, and students are given 60 minutes to complete each section. There is also a short stretch break between the two sections of the test.

Question Format:

All the questions on the EOCT are multiple choice.

Number of Questions:

Each section of the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT* contains 40 questions; there are a total of 80 questions on the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*.

Impact on Course Grade:

For students in grade 10 or above beginning the 2011–2012 school year, the final grade in each course is calculated by weighing the course grade 85% and the EOCT score 15%. For students in grade 9 beginning the 2011–2012 school year and later, the final grade in each course is calculated by weighing the course grade 80% and the EOCT score 20%. A student must have a final grade of at least 70 to pass the course and to earn credit toward graduation.

Reading Passages:

There will be informational and literary passages on the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*. Please see page 16 for more information on reading passages.

If you have additional questions regarding the EOCT administrations, please visit the Georgia Department of Education Web site at www.doe.k12.ga.us, see your teacher, or see your school test coordinator.

PREPARING FOR THE EOCT



WARNING!

You cannot prepare for this kind of test in one night. Questions will ask you to apply your knowledge, not list specific facts. Preparing for the EOCT will take time, effort, and practice.

In order to do your best on the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*, it is important that you take the time necessary to prepare for this test and develop those skills that will help you take the EOCT.

First, you need to make the most of your classroom experiences and test preparation time by using good **study skills**. Second, it is helpful to know general **test-taking strategies** to ensure that you will achieve your best score.

Study Skills



A LOOK AT YOUR STUDY SKILLS

Before you begin preparing for this test, you may want to consider your answers to the following questions. You may write your answers here or on a separate piece of paper.

1. How would you describe yourself as a student?
Response: _____
2. What are your study skills strengths and/or weaknesses as a student?
Response: _____
3. How do you typically prepare for an English language arts test?
Response: _____
4. Are there study methods you find particularly helpful? If so, what are they?
Response: _____
5. Describe an ideal study situation (environment).
Response: _____
6. Describe your actual study environment.
Response: _____
7. What can you change about the way you study to make your study time more productive?
Response: _____

Effective study skills for preparing for the EOCT can be divided into three categories.

- ◆ **Time Management**
- ◆ **Organization**
- ◆ **Active Participation**

Time Management



Do you have a plan for preparing for the EOCT? Often students have good intentions for studying and preparing for a test, but without a plan, many students fall short of their goals. Here are some strategies to consider when developing your study plan:

- ◆ Set realistic goals for what you want to accomplish during each study session and chart your progress.
- ◆ Study during your most productive time of the day.
- ◆ Study for reasonable amounts of time. Marathon studying is not productive.
- ◆ Take frequent breaks. Breaks can help you stay focused. Doing some quick exercises (e.g., sit-ups or jumping jacks) can help you stay alert.
- ◆ Be consistent. Establish your routine and stick to it.
- ◆ Study the most challenging test content first.
- ◆ For each study session, build in time to review what you learned in your last study session.
- ◆ Evaluate your accomplishments at the end of each study session.
- ◆ Reward yourself for a job well done.

Organization

You don't want to waste your study time. Searching for materials, trying to find a place to study, and debating what and how to study can all keep you from having a productive study session. Get organized and be prepared. Here are a few organizational strategies to consider.



- ◆ Establish a study area that has minimal distractions.
- ◆ Gather your materials in advance.
- ◆ Develop and implement your study plan (See Appendices A–D for sample study plan sheets).

Active Participation



Students who actively study will learn and retain information longer. Active studying also helps you stay more alert and be more productive while learning new information. What is active studying? It can be anything that gets you to interact with the material you are studying. Here are a few suggestions:

- ◆ Carefully read the information and then DO something with it. Mark the important material with a highlighter, circle it with a pen, write notes on it, or summarize the information in your own words.
- ◆ Ask questions. As you study, questions often come into your mind. Write them and actively seek the answers.
- ◆ Create sample test questions and answer them.
- ◆ Find a friend who is also planning to take the test and quiz each other.

Test-taking Strategies

There are many test-taking strategies that you can use before and during a test to help you have the most successful testing situation possible. Below are a few questions to help you take a look at your test-taking skills.


A LOOK AT YOUR TEST-TAKING SKILLS



As you prepare to take the EOCT, you may want to consider your answers to the following questions. You may write your answers here or on your own paper.

1. How would you describe your test-taking skills?
Response: _____
2. How do you feel when you are taking a test?
Response: _____
3. List the strategies that you already know and use when you are taking a test.
Response: _____
4. List test-taking behaviors you use when preparing for and taking a test that contribute to your success.
Response: _____
5. What would you like to learn about taking tests?
Response: _____

Suggested Strategies to Prepare for the EOCT

 **Learn from the past.** Think about your daily/weekly grades in your English classes (past and present) to answer the following questions.

- In which specific areas of English language arts were you or are you successful?

Response: _____


- Is there anything that has kept you from achieving higher scores?


Response: _____

- What changes should you make to achieve higher scores?

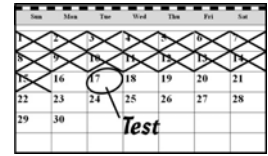
Response: _____

Before taking the EOCT, work toward removing or minimizing any obstacles that may stand in the way of performing your best. The test preparation ideas and test-taking strategies in this section are designed to help guide you to accomplish this.

 **Be prepared.** The best way to perform well on the EOCT is to be prepared. In order to do this, it is important that you know what standards/skills will be measured on the ***Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*** and then practice understanding and using those standards/skills. The TEST CONTENT section of this study guide is designed to help you understand which specific standards are on the ***Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*** and give you suggestions for how to study the standards that will be assessed. Take the time to read through this material and follow the practice suggestions. You can also ask your English teacher for any suggestions he or she may offer on preparing for the EOCT.

 **Start now.** Don't wait until the last minute to start preparing. Begin early and pace yourself. By preparing a little bit each day, you will retain the information longer and increase your confidence level. Find out when the EOCT will be administered, so you can allocate your time appropriately.

Suggested Strategies the Day before the EOCT



- ✓ **Review what you learned from this study guide.**
 1. Review the general test-taking strategies discussed in TOP 10 SUGGESTED STRATEGIES DURING THE EOCT on page 14.
 2. Review the content domain–specific information discussed in the section TEST CONTENT, beginning on page 15.
 3. Focus your attention on the domain, or domains, that you are most in need of improving.

- ✓ **Take care of yourself.**
 1. Try to get a good night’s sleep. Most people need an average of eight hours, but everyone’s sleep needs are different.
 2. Don’t drastically alter your routine. If you go to bed too early, you might lie in bed thinking about the test. You want to get enough sleep so you can do your best.

Suggested Strategies the Morning of the EOCT



Eat a good breakfast. Eat some food that has protein in it for breakfast (and for lunch if the test is given in the afternoon). Some examples of foods high in protein are peanut butter, meat, and eggs. Protein gives you long-lasting, consistent energy that will stay with you through the test to help you concentrate better. Some people believe it is wise to eat some sugar before a test, claiming it gives them an energy boost. In reality, the energy boost is very short lived, and you actually end up with less energy than before you ate the sugar. Also, don’t eat too much. A heavy meal can make you feel tired. So think about what you eat before the test.



Dress appropriately. If you are too hot or too cold during the test, it can affect your performance. It is a good idea to dress in layers, so you can stay comfortable regardless of the room temperature and keep your mind on the EOCT.







Arrive for the test on time. Racing late into the testing room can cause you to start the test feeling anxious. You want to be on time and prepared.

TOP 10

Suggested Strategies during the EOCT

These general test-taking strategies can help you do your best during the EOCT.

- 1 Focus on the test.**  Try to block out whatever else is going on around you. Take your time and think about what you are asked to do. Listen carefully to all the directions.
- 2 Budget your time.**  Be sure that you allocate an appropriate amount of time to work on each question on the test.
- 3 Take a quick break if you begin to feel tired.** To do this, put your pencil down, relax in your chair, and take a few deep breaths. Then, sit up straight, pick up your pencil, and begin to concentrate on the test again. Remember that each test section is only 60 minutes.
- 4 Use positive self-talk.** If you find yourself saying negative things to yourself, such as “I can’t pass this test,” it is important to recognize that you are doing this. Stop and think positive thoughts, such as “I prepared for this test, and I am going to do my best.” Letting the negative thoughts take over can affect how you take the test and your test score.
- 5 Mark in your test booklet.**  Mark key ideas or things you want to revisit in your test booklet. Remember that only the answers marked on your answer sheet will be scored.
- 6 Read the entire question and the possible answer choices.** It is important to read the entire question so you know what it is asking. Read each possible answer choice. Do not mark the first one that “looks good.”
- 7 Use what you know.**  Draw on what you have learned in class, from this study guide, and during your study sessions to help you answer the questions.
- 8 Use content domain-specific strategies to answer the questions.** In the TEST CONTENT section, there are a number of specific strategies that you can use to help improve your test performance. Spend time learning these helpful strategies, so you can use them while taking the test.
- 9 Think logically.** If you have tried your best to answer a question but you just aren’t sure of the correct answer, use the process of elimination. Look at each possible answer choice. If it doesn’t seem like a logical response, eliminate it. Do this until you’ve narrowed down your choices. If this doesn’t work, take your best educated guess. It is better to mark something than to leave it blank.
- 10 Check your answers.** When you have finished the test, go back and check your work.

A WORD ON TEST ANXIETY

It is normal to have some stress when preparing for and taking a test. It is what helps motivate us to study and try our best. Some students, however, experience anxiety that goes beyond normal test “jitters.” If you feel you are suffering from test anxiety that is keeping you from performing at your best, please speak to your school counselor, who can direct you to resources to help you address this problem.

TEST CONTENT

Up to this point in this study guide, you have been learning various strategies on how to prepare for and take the EOCT. This section focuses on what will be tested. It also includes a section of sample questions that will let you apply what you have learned in your classes and from this study guide.

The Georgia End-of-Course Test (EOCT) for *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition* is designed to test four major areas of knowledge, called **content domains**. The content domains are broad categories and, in some cases, include elements from more than one strand of the state-mandated content standards. Each of the content domains is broken down into smaller ideas. These smaller ideas are called **standards**. Each content domain contains standards that cover different ideas related to its content domain. Each question on the EOCT measures an individual standard within a content domain.

The four content domains for the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT* are important for several reasons. Together they represent the ability to understand what you read and communicate with others. Another more immediate reason that the content domains are important has to do with test preparation. The best way to prepare for any test is to study and know the material measured on the test. Since the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT* covers the four content domains and nothing else, isn't it a good idea to learn as much about these domains as you can? The more you understand about these domains, the greater your opportunity to be successful on the EOCT is.

The chart below lists the four content domains for the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*.

CONTENT DOMAINS

- I. Reading (Literary and Informational)
- II. Speaking and Listening
- III. Writing
- IV. Language

A Note on Reading Passages

The questions for Content Domains I and II will be based on informational and literary passages. Informational passages (nonfiction) typically share knowledge and/or convey central ideas, give instructions, or relate ideas by making connections between the familiar and unfamiliar. Informational writing is most commonly found in academic, personal, and/or job-related areas. Examples of informational writing include letters, biographical accounts, definitions, directions, abstracts, essays, reviews, and critiques. You can find informational passages in newspapers, magazines, and textbooks. Here is a short sample of what an *informational passage* may look like.

The Dime Novel

What were people reading in the latter half of the 19th century? One popular type of book was known as the dime novel. Dime novels were typically cheaply made paperback books that cost about a dime. Dime novels were popular from 1860 to around the turn of the century. These short novels were often historical action adventures or detective stories. The stories tended to be sensational and melodramatic. When Beadle and Adams published the first dime novel, it quickly became a huge success, selling over 300,000 copies in one year.

The information in the passage above is strictly factual. Literary passages, however, will tell a story or express an idea. Literary passages (fiction) often have characters and a plot structure. Examples of literary writing include short stories, novels, narratives, poetry, and drama. Here is a short sample of what a *literary passage* may look like. This excerpt is from Mark Twain's novel *Life on the Mississippi*, in which Twain explains what it was like to become a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River.

When I returned to the pilothouse St. Louis was gone and I was lost. Here was a piece of river which was all down in my book, but I could make neither head nor tail of it; you understand, it was turned around. I had seen it when coming upstream, but I had never faced about to see how it looked when it was behind me. My heart broke again, for it was plain that I had got to learn this troublesome river *both* ways.

Studying the Content Domains

You should plan to study/review the standards for ALL the content domains. To learn what the EOCT will cover, work through this TEST CONTENT section. It is organized by the content domains into the following areas:

- **A Look at the Content Domain:** an overview of what will be assessed in the content domain.
- **Spotlight on the Standards:** information about the specific standards that will be assessed (NOTE: The names of the standards may not be the exact names used by the Georgia Department of Education.).
- **Sample Test Questions:** sample questions *similar* to those that appear on the EOCT, followed by in-depth explanations of the answers.

Content Domain I: Reading (Literary and Informational)

A LOOK AT CONTENT DOMAIN I



Test questions in this domain will ask you to read for general understanding and to identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structures and characteristics of fiction, drama, poetry, and nonfiction. You will also be tested on your ability to evaluate how language affects meaning and tone and to provide evidence from the text to support your understanding. Your answers to the questions will help show how well you can perform on the following standards:

- Use knowledge of literary characteristics to demonstrate understanding of a variety of texts.
- Cite specific evidence from a text to demonstrate understanding of what the text says explicitly and what can be inferred.
- Determine the theme(s) or central idea(s) of a text; analyze the development of a theme or idea throughout the course of the text, using specific details to support analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
- Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States.
- Analyze how an author's ideas or claims are developed by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language and connotative meanings; analyze how word choice affects meaning and tone.
- Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work.
- Understand and acquire new vocabulary and use it correctly.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ *Use knowledge of literary characteristics to demonstrate understanding of a variety of texts.* ★

This standard encompasses all forms of literary and informational texts. You must draw upon your knowledge of fiction, drama, poetry, literary nonfiction, and informational nonfiction to answer questions in this domain. To review, you should refresh your knowledge of these different genres, common literary terms, and terms specific to certain types of texts.

To make your review easier, this standard is divided into four sections by **genre**: fiction, drama, poetry, and nonfiction. **Fiction** is a literary genre based on imagination and not necessarily on fact. Short stories and novels are examples. **Drama** is a literary genre intended to be performed by actors on a stage. **Poetry** is a literary genre that may encompass a variety of metered or rhythmically measured lines and is intended to evoke an emotional experience in the reader. **Nonfiction**, on the other hand, is a genre based on fact. Essays, editorials, and biographies are works of nonfiction.

Genre

A **genre** (ZHAN-RA) is a category of composition. Each genre has a particular style, form, and content.

The following types of passages may be used on the EOCT:

- **Fiction** (stories), including adventure stories, historical fiction, mysteries, myths, science fiction, realistic fiction, allegories, parodies, satire, and graphic novels
- **Drama**, including one-act and multi-act plays
- **Poetry**, including narrative poems, lyric poems, free-verse poems, sonnets, odes, ballads, and epics
- **Nonfiction**, including exposition, argument, and functional text in the form of personal essays, speeches, opinion pieces, essays about art or literature, biographies, memoirs, journalism, and historical, scientific, technical, or economic accounts (including digital sources) written for a broad audience

FICTION

To discuss literature effectively, you need to understand and use common literary terms. Compare the following two sentences, and then decide which sentence is likely to please your English teacher more:

Sentence #1: “I thought that story was really great.”

Sentence #2: “The story had a suspenseful plot, and the character of Isaac was very believable.”

The first sentence will leave your teacher wondering why you thought the story was great, while the second sentence will get you started toward a good literary review because of its specificity.

Questions for this standard will measure your knowledge of some common literary elements and your ability to use them to interpret what you read. Many literary elements apply to fiction as well as nonfiction. Here, we’ll discuss the most common literary elements. Later in the guide for this domain, we’ll focus on elements more specific to drama, poetry, and nonfiction.

The best way to prepare for these questions is to study literary elements and terms and be able to locate examples in a text. In addition, you should be able to analyze the impact of literary elements on a piece of literature. Below are explanations of some literary terms. Remember, you can also look up these words and others in a dictionary or in your English textbook.

Common Literary Terms

- 1. Character development (characterization).** An author may reveal a character through the character’s thoughts, words, appearance, and actions, or through what other characters say or think. An author may also tell us directly what the character is like. Examining the characters and how they interact with each other is a key element to understanding the piece of literature.

Here are some common questions about characterization:

- Who is the main character? What words describe this character’s personality traits?
- Who are the minor characters? What roles do they play?
- How is one character similar to or different from another?
- How is the main character involved in the conflict?

- 2. Setting.** The setting is when and where a story takes place. You may be asked to determine why the setting is important or how the setting affects the interpretation. The setting can clarify conflict, be the catalyst for conflict, illuminate character, affect the mood (see literary term #9), and act as a symbol.

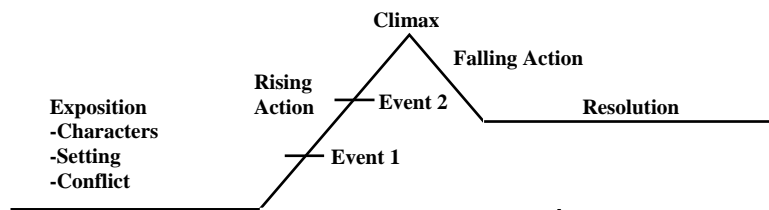
3. **Plot.** Literature commonly follows a specific pattern or plot structure. It often begins with **exposition** that may introduce the characters, establish the setting, and reveal the problem or conflict. The tension may build through a series of **complications** (incidents that either help or hinder the protagonist in finding a solution). This is the **rising action**. The **climax** is the peak or turning point of the action, when the problem is resolved. At this point the reader usually knows the outcome. The **denouement** or **falling action** is the part after the climax. It gives any necessary explanation and ends with **resolution**, the sense that the story is complete.

The Importance of Time

Sometimes authors use foreshadowing and flashback to help tell a story. These techniques involve altering the timeframe from which a story is related. With **foreshadowing**, the author gives hints of what is to come in the future. With **flashback**, the storyline shifts to the past to give readers important information to help them understand the story better.

STRATEGY BOX—Map It Out

Using a plot map can help you better understand a story's development.



4. **Irony.** Irony is a form of speech intended to convey the opposite of the actual meaning of the words. There are several different types of irony, including dramatic, situational, and verbal. You are probably most familiar with **verbal irony**, or sarcasm. The speaker's intended central idea is far different from the usual meaning of the words. For example, a teenager may tell his mother, "I just *love* cleaning up my room," when, in fact, the teenager means that he hates to clean his room. (Please see pages 36–37 for more information on verbal irony and figurative language.)

Another example of irony that may not be as familiar is **irony of fate**, also called **situational irony**. Irony of fate refers to developments that are far from what is expected or believed to be deserved. One example of irony of fate would be famed composer Ludwig von Beethoven's loss of hearing.

5. **Imagery.** Imagery, or language that appeals to the senses, allows the reader to experience what the author is describing. You've heard the saying "a picture is worth a thousand words." Authors use imagery to convey a mental picture for the reader—more than they could accomplish with literal words.

- 6. Symbolism.** Symbolism is another way in which writers use language to express something more than the literal meaning of the words. A symbol is something that stands for something else. For example, an eagle may symbolize freedom.
- 7. Conflict.** Most plots have a conflict. The conflict is what triggers the action in the story. Here are some common conflicts in literature:
- person vs. person
 - person vs. nature
 - person vs. self
 - person vs. society
 - person vs. machine
- 8. Point of view.** The point of view is the perspective from which a story is told. The point of view refers to the narrator of a story, poem, or sometimes a drama, and determines how much he or she knows.

<i>First Person</i>	The events are told by a character in the story using his or her own words. First-person stories have narrators who use <i>I</i> , <i>me</i> , and <i>my</i> throughout the story. This sentence is an example of first-person point of view: “I knew it was risky, but I was willing to take that chance.”
<i>Second Person</i>	The narrator addresses the reader directly using the word <i>you</i> . This perspective is not as common as either the first- or third-person points of view. This sentence is an example of second-person point of view: “You knew it was risky, but you were willing to take that chance.”
<i>Third Person</i>	A speaker outside the action narrates the events using <i>he</i> , <i>she</i> , and <i>they</i> . The narrator may tell the events from the perspective of one character, focusing on this character’s thoughts and feelings, or the narrator may see and know everything, even the thoughts of all the characters. This sentence is an example of third-person point of view: “Carol knew it was risky, but she was willing to take the chance.”

- 9. Mood.** Mood in a piece of literature is a feeling or emotion created by the choice of words, the characters and their actions, and the setting. Some authors create mood by using imagery. The example below shows how the mood of a story can change by making a few alterations:

Imagine a group of people in an old, three-story house. The people are whispering and walking very slowly through the house. They are easily startled. Some are visibly shaking. The mood created here is one of scary suspense. A reader will wonder what has scared the people and may feel some suspense about the events to come.

Now, change the mood by imagining the people talking loudly. They are gesturing at various rooms in the house and whistling appreciatively. They seem excited about the

old, colored-glass windows. A reader could assume that these people are about to move into the old house. The mood is no longer scary and suspenseful. It is now light and optimistic.

- 10. Tone.** The tone of a piece of literature is the attitude the **author** has toward the subject he or she is writing about. Tone is reflected in the author’s word choices, style, and opinions. Some words used to describe tone in literature are ironic, serious, puzzled, intimate, outraged, and cynical.

Mood is sometimes confused with tone. Mood is created by setting and the actions of the characters; it is the atmosphere. Mood affects how the **reader** feels in reading the story; tone reflects the author’s feelings toward the subject of the story. Tone is examined in several sections of this study guide.

- 11. Theme.** The theme is the deeper central idea of a text. It refers to a universal statement about life and/or society that can be discerned from the reading of a text. The theme of a work is not the same as its main topic, which focuses strictly on the content. The theme of a literary work is often the meaning you take away from it. Theme is covered in more detail on pages 28–31.

NOTE: Most of these literary terms are used when discussing works of fiction, but may also apply to literary nonfiction, other texts, as well as presentations.

Questions related to fictional texts may look like these:

- **Which sentence from the story foreshadows the climax?**
- **What causes the narrator to struggle with his decision?**
- **How does the setting affect the pace of the story?**

DRAMA

This part of the standard focuses on drama, or dramatic literature. You will need to understand and analyze types of dramatic literature. The two most common types are tragedies and comedies. A **tragedy** is a serious play that ends in disaster and sorrow. A **comedy** is a lighthearted play intended to amuse the audience. Comedies usually end happily.

As with other literary genres in this standard, you will need to analyze the characters, structures, and themes of dramatic literature. In order to answer these questions, use what you know about these elements in other genres to answer the questions related to dramatic literature.

You also need to review terms that are more specific to drama.

Dramatic conventions are rules in which the actors and audience engage during a play. Some conventions relate to how the audience and the actors interact. For example, the audience knows to become quiet when the lights dim. **Dramatic irony** refers to a situation in which the audience knows more than the character onstage. A character does or says something of greater importance than he or she knows. The audience, however, is aware of the meaning and importance of the act or speech.

The final part of this standard asks you to analyze how dramatic conventions support and enhance interpretation of dramatic literature. To answer questions in this section, you will need to apply what you have learned about dramatic conventions.

What's with All the Drama?

Tragedies and comedies are not the only kinds of drama. Here's a short list of the other kinds of drama you'll be expected to recognize.

A **political drama** is a drama or play with a political component, advocating a certain point of view or describing a political event.

Modern drama, like all modern literature, explores themes of alienation and disconnectedness. Modern drama, which became popular in the early 1900s, strives to let the audience feel as if it is peering in on real-life situations and experiencing real-life emotions.

The **theatre of the absurd** refers to plays written in the 1950s and 1960s with the basic belief that human existence is absurd, or without meaning. The play itself often lacks the usual conventions of plot, character, or setting. Edward Albee's *The American Dream* (1960) is considered the first American absurdist drama.

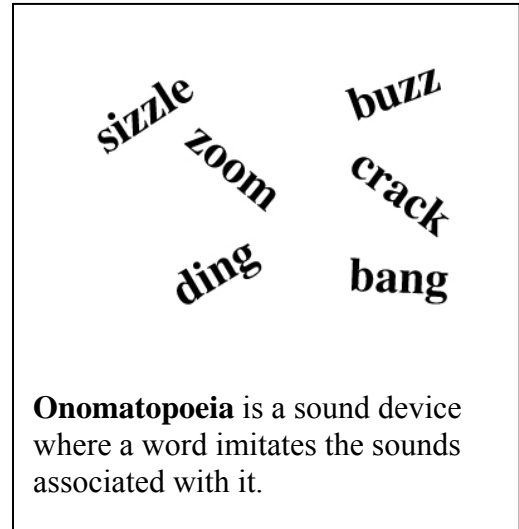
POETRY

For the poetry part of this standard, you need to identify and respond to the subject matter, language, and sound devices in a variety of poems. While some of these devices may appear in other fiction and nonfiction, they help to make poetry a distinctive genre.

To answer questions in this standard, you need to identify the topic of the poem (what it's about) and its theme (what statement it makes about life or society). Then you'll need to identify how the poet creates the topic and the theme. How the poet reveals the topic and the theme through the use of imagery, word choice, and structure.

As you read a poem, you may “hear” the writing in your mind. Sound devices make poetry sound better in your mind. These sound devices include the following:

- **Alliteration.** Alliteration is the repetition of one initial sound in more than one word. Usually, the repeated sound is of a consonant. “Wild and woolly” and “hale and hearty” are examples.
- **Rhyme scheme.** The rhyme scheme is the pattern of rhymes in a poem. Each new rhyme in a stanza is represented by a different letter of the alphabet. For example, in a four-line poem in which every other line rhymes, the rhyme scheme is abab. In a six-line poem with every two lines rhyming, the rhyme scheme is aabbcc.



Be sure to study **ALL** sound device terms you have learned in your English class.

While sound devices are important in poetry, the structure of a poem is often its most distinctive characteristic. Poems are written in stanzas, or groups of lines. These stanzas are arranged in either fixed form or free form. **Fixed form** is what most people consider typical poetry: it's written in traditional verse and generally rhymes. Some fixed form poems have specific requirements on length, rhyme scheme, and number of syllables. A sonnet, for example, is a 14-line rhymed poem. **Free form**, or free verse, poetry follows no specific guidelines about rhyme, meter, or length. Free form often tries to capture the cadence of regular speech. Some stanzas may rhyme but not in a regular scheme.

Some poems are **narrative** poems. The main purpose of a narrative poem is to tell a story. **Lyric** poetry expresses a person's thoughts or feelings. Elegies, odes, and sonnets are types of lyric poems.

Questions related to poetry may look like the following:

- **Which element of the poem MOST reflects the speaker’s joy?**
- **How does the mood shift from the first stanza to the second stanza?**
- **How would the speaker in Poem 2 most likely answer the question posed in Poem 1?**

NONFICTION

The questions for this standard may address the development of ideas and events of any type of nonfictional material. There are a number of types of nonfiction and informational passages you may encounter on the EOCT. The types of texts you will read come from three common kinds of writing, each with its own purpose and conventions:

- **Informational Text** is writing that explains or informs. Informational texts include business letters and memos; how-to passages that explain a process or project; news stories; and historical, scientific, and technical accounts (including digital sources) written for a broad audience. These texts use expository and descriptive writing to explain and describe the topic in order to inform the reader.
- **Argumentation**, or argumentative writing, is also known as persuasive writing. Argumentation is based on logic and reason and has the intent of informing as well as persuading. The sole purpose of persuasive writing is to convince people to think or act in a certain way. Most advertising is considered persuasive. Argumentation may include editorials and opinion pieces; speeches; letters to the editor; job application letters; and critical reviews, such as movie and book reviews. (Advertising will be covered separately in Domain II).
- **Literary Nonfiction** is narrative writing that tells a story and often employs the literary devices found in stories and novels. Literary nonfiction includes anecdote; memoir (first-person account of a time in the writer’s life, e.g., a person’s travels), biography (third-person account of someone’s life), or autobiography (first-person account of a person’s entire life to the present); or other retelling of true events.

NOTE: Most passages contain some combination of the common kinds of writing but will generally fit best in one category or the other.

Questions related to nonfiction texts may look like these:

- **Why does the author MOST likely organize the essay from present to past?**
- **How does the description of the concert crowd support the argument for assigned seating?**

- **Why does the author include a quote by the park ranger in the introduction?**

STRATEGY BOX—Take Notes While You Read

Whenever you read an informational passage on the EOCT, stop after each paragraph and ask yourself, “What is the main idea of this paragraph?” After each paragraph, take a moment to jot some notes that summarize what that paragraph was about. Sample notes about an essay titled “Why Homework Is a Good Idea” may look something like this:

- First Paragraph: *importance of education*
- Second Paragraph: *advantages of giving homework*
- Third Paragraph: *how busy students feel they don’t have time for homework*
- Fourth Paragraph: *ways students who have very little time can still get their homework done*
- Fifth Paragraph: *how homework is an important part of education*

Don’t spend too much time trying to come up with the perfect summary of each paragraph. Just use about three to ten words to quickly summarize what each paragraph covers.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Cite specific evidence from a text to demonstrate understanding of what the text says explicitly and what can be inferred. ★

This standard asks you to read like a detective. Not only is it important to understand the key ideas and details in a passage, but also to point to the evidence that supports your understanding. Questions in this standard will ask you to locate support for important ideas and concepts within the text; they will ask not just *what* you know, but *how* you know it.

In order to demonstrate your understanding of these ideas and concepts, you will need to support them with accurate and detailed references to the text. Questions for this standard will ask you to identify sentences that support or explain an idea. Taking notes while you read will help you prepare for these questions.

Strategy Tip—Answer the Question First

As you are answering questions on the EOCT, you should always try to answer the question **BEFORE** you read the answer choices. Once you have decided what the answer is, look at the choices. Are there any choices close to the answer you came up with? That's probably the correct answer. Looking at the answer choices first, before you have a clear idea of the correct answer, may confuse you. Some of the answer choices will be close to the correct answer, but will not be the best answer. If you are unsure of the correct answer, you may choose the close, but wrong, answer.

To see how this strategy works, read the following question:

Which description BEST explains the relationship between Chris and John?

Based on the passage for this question, you may answer “a close and supportive father-son relationship.” Turning to the answer choices, you’ll find these:

- A turbulent father-son relationship
- B close friendship between two peers
- C nurturing father-son relationship
- D strong alliance based on a common foe

Because you have already answered the question “a close and supportive father-son relationship,” you can quickly identify choice **C** as the correct answer.

**Spotlight on the Standards**

★ Determine the theme(s) or central idea(s) of a text; analyze the development of a theme or idea throughout the course of the text, using specific details to support analysis; provide an objective summary of the text. ★

The questions for this standard focus on the themes of literary texts and the central ideas of informational texts. You will be asked to identify and analyze the broader meaning or central idea of a text and to evaluate how an author’s style or word choice conveys a theme. You may be asked to identify multiple themes in one passage. You may also be asked to compare and contrast the presentation of a single theme across different genres. In order to answer these questions, you should review what you know about themes.

Reading a good work of fiction can provide you with more than just entertainment. It can give you insight into universal views on life and society. Most literary works have one or more themes that are expressed through the plot. To identify a work's theme or themes, you may ask yourself the following questions: Why did the author have this happen? What point do you think the author was trying to make? What greater significance may this event have?

Remember that a theme is **not** the same as the topic or the plot. The following examples may help you to understand the differences.

Topic: After her friend spreads lies about her, Kathy ends their friendship.

Theme: Friendships are often more complicated than they first seem.

The topic in this example tells you what happens in a particular novel. It's a brief summary of the plot. The theme, on the other hand, is a more general explanation of what the plot reveals about life. Think of the concluding sentence of most fables; this "moral of the story" often appears on a separate line after the narrative has concluded. For example, at the end of the story "The Tortoise and the Hare" is the central idea *slow and steady wins the race*. At the end of "The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing" is the central idea *appearances can be deceptive*. These are themes.

Because themes offer universal truths about life, you may more easily notice themes that are closely related to events in your life. In the example of Kathy and her friend, you may relate Kathy's situation to a difficult relationship of your own. You don't have to have a personal connection to themes in a work, but if you are having trouble identifying a theme, pay attention to the parts of the story that affect you. The theme may be **implicit** instead of **explicit**.

Read Between the Lines

“Read between the lines” is a common saying whose meaning does not correspond with the literal meaning of its words. A person cannot actually read between the lines of a text; there are no words there. The saying means to think about how the words that *are* in a text suggest ideas or themes that are *not* written in black and white. Good writers often do not tell the reader everything directly. They let the reader come to his or her own conclusions by making connections or filling in the gaps. An idea that is not stated outright is **implicit**, meaning the idea is *implied* or hinted at indirectly, not *explained* or stated directly. By contrast, an **explicit** idea or theme is fully expressed or revealed by the writer. Rather than being “between” the lines, an explicit theme is explained or stated directly.

Consider this example from a memoir:

Of *course* it rained on the day I left. The slate grey sky hung low and seemed to push down on me as I walked away. My heart was as low and grey as that sulking sky.

Can you summarize the idea implied in the example? The text does not come right out and say that the speaker feels sad or melancholy, but there are plenty of details that support this idea. The rainy day, the fact that the speaker is leaving somewhere or someone, the imagery of the heavy grey sky and its comparison with the speaker’s heart all support a description of the speaker as someone burdened by sadness or regret.

An example of the same idea made explicitly may read like this:

I was not surprised that it rained on the day I left. The weather made a sad day even worse; it was as miserable and gloomy outside as I was inside.

In this example, the reader can point right to the text on the page to show that the speaker is downhearted. The reference to the “sad day” and the description of “miserable and gloomy” feelings explain the speaker’s state of mind without any question.

Nonfictional and informational texts are less likely than literary texts to suggest a theme, but well-written nonfiction will often be structured around a central idea or main argument.

The following example demonstrates the difference between a topic and a central idea in nonfiction:

Topic: In this article, the author describes her year volunteering as a health educator in Kenya.

Central Idea: This article reveals the author's naïveté in assuming that good intentions are all that is needed to change deeply held cultural beliefs.

For both literary and informational passages, you will be asked to identify how themes or central ideas develop over the course of the text. You will need to study specific parts of the text, such as phrases, sentences, and paragraphs, and choose examples that reveal bigger ideas.

Questions about theme may look like these:

- **What statement about human nature does the story suggest?**
- **How would the writer of this letter MOST likely explain the concept of forgiveness?**
- **Which sentence from the article BEST supports the investigator's main argument?**

Still Confused About Themes?

Here are some points to consider:

- ◆ Does the title suggest the theme?
- ◆ Does the main character change in a significant way?
- ◆ Are there strong or repeated images and symbols?

Questions in this standard may ask you to compare and contrast the presentation of a theme or topic across genres and to explain how the author's choice of literary form affects the delivery of the universal ideas about life and society.

Questions for this part of the standard may look like this:

- **What statement do both passages make about the value of facing one's fears?**
- **How would the theme of the essay be different if it were written from the first-person point of view?**



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States. ★

The passages tested on this standard will be a combination of literary and informational texts from world literature. Questions for this standard will ask you to understand how culture and life experiences affect the point of view of authors and characters. You may be asked to make connections or discern differences between cultures and points of view. Questions may also ask you to analyze how these similarities and difference influence the literary elements of a text.

As you read texts from around the world, you can prepare for questions in this standard by thinking about the literary elements described in the first standard. Do the characters' words or actions suggest a certain outlook on the world? Do they provide clues as to how the character sees himself or herself in relation to others? How does the time and place of a passage shape the plot? For example, how would the highlights in a "first-day-of-school" memoir differ between a boy who attended a one-room schoolhouse in northern Canada and a girl who attended a large government-run school in China?

Consider this excerpt from a folktale from Fiji, and then read the questions that follow.

How the Mosquitoes Left Kambara
By Pleasant DeSpain

- 1 Once long ago, a small island in the Pacific called Kambara was infested with mosquitoes. The island people were constantly at war with the pesky insects and grew weary of being bitten, especially at night. All day long the women of the tribe pounded tree bark into fine-mesh screens to keep the mosquitoes out.
- 2 Now it happened that a prince from the island of Oneata sailed throughout the South Pacific in search of treasures for his people. He landed on Kambara, and the chief welcomed him as an honored guest. After a great feast, the prince was shown to a sleeping room. It was surrounded with beautifully painted mosquito screens.
- 3 “Tell me, O Chief of Kambara,” said the prince, “why do you hang such wonderful cloth all about the room?”
- 4 “For the mosquitoes,” replied the chief.
- 5 “Mosquitoes? What are mosquitoes?” asked the prince.
- 6 “Our little . . . friends of the night. They are small flying insects that . . . sing us to sleep each night,” said the chief. He was too embarrassed to tell the truth.
- 7 “How nice,” said the prince. “We have nothing like mosquitoes on Oneata.”
- 8 “Too bad,” said the chief. “We have more than we need.”
- 9 The prince yawned, and just as he began to fall asleep, the night air filled with the hum and buzz of thousands of hungry mosquitoes flying outside the curtain. “Such a soothing sound,” he muttered. “A rare treasure, indeed.”

. . .

Questions that address personal experiences and cultural points of view in this passage could include the following:

- **In paragraph 6, why is the chief embarrassed to tell the truth?**

To answer this question, you should look not only at paragraph 6, but also at the paragraphs leading up to it. The first paragraph explains what a big problem the mosquitoes are. Paragraph 2 introduces the prince, who we learn is rich and of high status. Paragraph 2 establishes the island chief’s social position as below that of the prince. Paragraph 4 reveals that the prince does not know what mosquitoes are; this is where the chief realizes that to reveal the negative aspects of mosquitoes will

disappoint the prince, who he has been trying to impress. The chief fears this will make his lifestyle or situation appear inferior. The chief is afraid the prince will think less of him, so he is embarrassed to tell the truth. The correct answer to this question may read, “He is worried that the prince will think less of him.”

- **What element in the story symbolizes the different points of view of the chief and the prince?**

The fine-mesh screens are introduced in the first paragraph and are described throughout the excerpt. To the island people, they represent the hard, practical work of keeping mosquitoes away. To the prince, they represent beautiful decorations. The mosquito screens are the symbolic objects that represent the differing points of view of the two cultures. Look at the words chosen to describe the screens in the first paragraph (the islanders’ perspective), “All day long the women ... pounded tree bark into fine-mesh screens,” and contrast this with the words chosen to describe the screens in paragraph 3 (the prince’s perspective), “such wonderful cloth.” The different tones suggested by each description are evidence of differing points of view.

- **Why does the prince hear the buzz of mosquitoes as soothing instead of irritating?**

The prince is a visitor to the island. He is honored by the chief and his people and is given the best treatment. He does not know what mosquitoes are and has never had the experience of being bitten. His personal experiences in life have given him no reason to interpret the sound of mosquitoes as negative. The answer to this question may read, “His unfamiliarity with mosquitoes prevents him from having a negative association with their sound.”



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Analyze how an author’s ideas or claims are developed by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text. ★

Questions for this standard will ask you to evaluate the arguments made in persuasive texts such as editorials, speeches, and scientific theories and propositions. In particular, you will be asked to evaluate the evidence authors use to make their arguments.

A **conclusion** is a statement that must be true if the supporting statements are true. These supporting statements may be facts, or they may be assumptions that are believed to be true.



Build a Pyramid

Visualizing a pyramid is one way to understand the relationship between conclusions and supporting statements. The conclusion is the top block of a pyramid. It rests on all the lower blocks, which are the supporting statements. With this image, you can see how conclusions are “held up” by their supporting arguments and how supporting arguments “build up” to a conclusion.

These questions will focus on the relationship between supporting evidence and conclusions. For example, an author may argue that a bird the size of a small plane really exists in the Alaskan wilderness. You may be asked the following question:

Which statement would BEST support the author’s argument?

- A Several Alaskan companies use small planes.
- B People outdoors often imagine they see things.
- C All the animals in Alaska have been researched.
- D Nature has the ability to constantly surprise us.

Since the conclusion is given, that the bird really exists, you can ask yourself, “Which answer choice helps support this conclusion?” The answer choice that helps will be the correct answer. In this case, “Nature has the ability to constantly surprise us” helps support the claim that something never seen before—a bird the size of a small plane—actually exists. The answer is choice **D**.

STRATEGY BOX—Become a Detective

Take a close look at the passage. What kind of support does the author offer? Does the author use personal examples, descriptive details, statistics, relevant research, facts, opinions, or hearsay as support? The kind of support tells a lot about how strong the argument is. For example, if the author uses a personal example to make a point about how well a medical procedure works, it is not as convincing as scientific research to support the claim.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language and connotative meanings; analyze how word choice affects meaning and tone.★

Authors employ a variety of techniques to convey meaning, engage readers, and express familiar ideas in new ways. Some may use **figurative language**, or figures of speech, to convey meaning that goes beyond the literal meaning of the words.

Literal Language: The words mean exactly what they say.	Figurative Language: The words are comparisons to different, often unexpected, ideas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have a <i>headache</i>. • Please <i>watch</i> my suitcase. • He went to <i>eat lunch</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My head is <i>killing me</i>. • Please <i>keep an eye on</i> my suitcase. • He went to <i>grab a bite</i>.

Whenever you describe an object or an idea by comparing it with something else, you are using figurative language. The two figures of speech with which you are probably most familiar are similes and metaphors. Both are comparisons. A **simile** makes a comparison using a linking word such as *like*, *as*, or *than*. If a graduation speaker describes her first job as being “about as exciting as watching grass grow,” she is using a simile; she compares the pace of her job with the pace of grass growing. A **metaphor** makes a comparison without a linking word; instead of one thing being *like* another, one thing *is* another. If that same graduation speaker warns students about the stress of the business world by saying, “It’s a jungle out there,” she is using a metaphor; she emphasizes her point by equating the wild chaos of the business world with an actual jungle.

Other examples of figurative language to recognize are **personification** (giving human characteristics to non-human things), **hyperbole** (exaggeration beyond belief), and **idioms** (quirky sayings and expressions specific to a language). The chart on the next page summarizes the types of figurative language that you should be able to identify and interpret.

Term	Definition	Example
Simile	A direct comparison between two unlike things, often connected by <i>like</i> , <i>as</i> , or <i>than</i>	Life is like a box of chocolates.
Metaphor	An implied comparison between two unrelated things	My summer plans had become a box of chocolates melting in the sun.
Personification	A figure of speech giving human characteristics to an animal, thing, idea, or other inanimate object	The box of chocolates called to me from the kitchen.
Hyperbole	An extravagant or excessive exaggeration	It will take me ten years to eat that huge box of chocolates.
Idiom	A saying or expression specific to speakers of a particular language	That gadget is about as useful as a chocolate teapot.

Another technique authors use to present precise ideas and set a certain tone is to choose words based on their connotations. The dictionary definition of a word is its **denotation**. The **connotation** of a word is a specific meaning or idea that the word brings to mind.

For example, both *laugh* and *giggle* have a similar denotation. These words refer to sounds you make when you find something funny. However, the word *giggle* has youthful connotations associated with it. You often think of children giggling, but rarely think of grandfathers giggling. The word *laugh* has no such connotations associated with it. Therefore, while the denotation of both words is the same, the connotations are different. If a writer decides to describe a grandfather giggling, she probably means to hint that he has a youthful spirit or is feeling particularly young at heart.

Once you are familiar with figurative and connotative uses of language, you will need to analyze how those uses impact the meaning and tone of a passage. Every writer makes choices when it comes to which word(s) to use in a given situation. Those word choices can lead readers to imagine a particular time or place. Word choice can set a formal or informal tone, depending on whether the author wants to persuade, entertain, or impress readers.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ **Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work.** ★

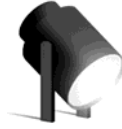
Authors often use ideas, characters, themes, settings, and plots from earlier writings and transform them to meet a new purpose or audience. Shakespeare, for example, used themes and topics of Ovid (an early Roman poet) and the Bible, as well as early histories and biographical works. From these he drew characters and plots for his plays, rewriting the narratives to fit his needs and audiences.

A more modern example might look at the 1978 film *The Wiz*—an adaptation of the classic 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*. *The Wizard of Oz* is set in Kansas, where a young white girl named Dorothy and her dog Toto get swept away in a tornado and end up in the fantasy Land of Oz. *The Wiz* features an African American cast and is set in Harlem, New York City. The main character (also named Dorothy) is a 24-year-old schoolteacher whose adventure begins when she goes outdoors to get her dog Toto during a snowstorm. She retrieves her dog, but they are both swept away into a version of Oz that is in many ways similar to the original, but also very different from it.

On the EOCT you may see questions that ask you to compare and contrast two texts from different time periods. You will be asked to evaluate elements such as plot, character, and setting, and you will need to think about why authors make certain choices: What is the purpose of leaving out certain parts of an original plot? What effect does a different setting have on the theme of a text? What message is an author trying to send by changing a significant detail of the main character?

More questions that address adaptations and interpretations of source material may look like these:

- **Which trait of the main character is MOST similar between the two versions of the tale?**
- **How does Shakespeare’s version MAINLY contrast with the historical account of Caesar?**
- **How does the shift to an indoor setting cause characters to make different choices than in the earlier version?**



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Understand and acquire new vocabulary and use it correctly. ★

Questions for this standard will ask you to understand and acquire new vocabulary words that are appropriate for ninth graders. Questions for this standard measure your ability to use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words. You will identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech. Questions will also test your ability to use appropriate reference materials to clarify meaning, pronunciation, parts of speech, and word origins.

For unfamiliar vocabulary words, you will be asked to use **context**—the language surrounding the word—to find clues to the word’s meaning. By reading the sentence or paragraph that contains the unfamiliar word, you should get a sense of the overall meaning of that portion of the text. Also, the word’s position or function in the sentence is often a clue to its meaning.

The words tested in this standard are ones that ninth-grade students should know. Short phrases may also be tested under this standard. A question may look something like the following:

Read the following paragraph.

Everyone could tell it had once been a huge tree. The roots at its base were as large as a grown person. When the tree died, someone had used a chainsaw to cut away most of the tree. All that was left was a truncated stump of wood. The stump made a picnic table that could seat eight people around it comfortably.

Based on the paragraph, the word *truncated* means

- A modified
- B added
- C shortened
- D replaced

Truncated is a difficult word. But you can use context clues to help determine its meaning. The context of a word is simply the words that appear before and after the word. Understanding the words around an unknown word should help give you clues to its meaning. The words around *truncated* should give you a good idea about what it means. There was once a large tree; what happened to it? Most of it was cut down, leaving only a “truncated” stump of wood. Choices B and D are wrong because the tree was cut down, not “added” or “replaced.” The tree was, in fact, “modified,” (choice A), but upon looking further at choice C, we can see that what remained could best be described as a shortened, or truncated, piece of wood. Therefore, answer choice C is the right answer. This reinforces the tip to read all of the options, even though you see one that seems to be correct. Choice A is close, but incorrect.

STRATEGY BOX—Use the Words Around It

When you are faced with an unknown word, go back to the passage. Start reading two sentences before the word appears, and continue reading for two sentences afterwards. If that doesn't give you enough clues, look elsewhere in the passage. By reading the context in which the word appears, you may be able to make an educated guess.

How a word is used in a sentence can also determine its meaning. If the context of the word changes, then the meaning of the word can also change. This change can be very basic, such as a word being used as a noun in one sentence and a verb in the next.

Set as a noun: That is a lovely *set* of dinner plates.

Set as a verb: Please *set* the books down on the table.

However, a change in meaning can be subtler. Look at the word *shrieked* in the next two sentences and notice how the meaning of the word changes slightly.

Sentence 1: “There’s a monster in the house!” the woman *shrieked*.

Sentence 2: “I just won 65 million dollars!” the woman *shrieked*.

In the first sentence, the woman shrieks out of fear. In the second sentence, the shriek is one of extreme excitement and happiness. The context of the sentence has determined whether the *shriek* is good or bad.

To answer questions for this standard, you will also have to use your knowledge of prefixes, suffixes, and word roots to understand the meaning of new words. The English language was not created “from scratch.” It consists of borrowed words and word parts from many different languages. In particular, many words are formed from combinations of Greek or Latin prefixes, suffixes, and word roots. You can use your knowledge of these word parts to help you determine the meaning of a word.

For example, adding an *-er* to many verbs makes them nouns. *Dance* becomes *dancer*; *listen* becomes *listener*. Adding *-ly* to some adjectives can make them adverbs. For example, the adjective *quick* becomes the adverb *quickly*. Some adjectives become nouns when *-ness* is added to the end. *Happy* becomes *happiness*, for example. Knowing words in one form will help you determine their meaning when they appear in other forms.

Some word parts appear in more than one word. For instance, the word root *geo-* is Greek for “earth.” The English words *geology* (“study of the earth”) and *geometry* (“measure of land”) both contain this word root. Once you learn the meaning of *geo-*, you can take an educated guess at what a word like *geophone* means, even if you have never seen the word before.

Geophone

As its name suggests, a *geophone* is an electronic device used to listen to vibrations in the earth. Geophones can help determine whether or not an earthquake will occur in a certain area. Although the word contains the suffix *-phone*, geophones are not used to place actual phone calls.

Cognates are words that have the same origin or are related in some way to words in other languages. You can use your knowledge of other languages to help you understand the meanings of certain words. Examples of cognates are *night* (English), *noche* (Spanish), *notte* (Italian), and *nuit* (French). All are derived from an Indo-European language.

STRATEGY BOX—Analyze the Word by Its Parts

Look for familiar prefixes, suffixes, and word roots when faced with an unknown word. Knowing the meaning of these word parts will help you determine the meaning of the unknown word.

Questions for this standard will also test your ability to use reference materials to find the pronunciation of a word, clarify its precise meaning, determine its part of speech, and find its origins.

Do you know when to use a dictionary or a thesaurus? As you know, a dictionary is your best source for the definition and spelling of words. You can also discover a word’s origin or etymology in a dictionary. If you need help with choosing the most precise word or you want to add variety to your writing, you should turn to a **thesaurus** to find synonyms and related words.

To apply your information on using reference sources, you may be asked questions such as the following:

Read this dictionary entry.

drive (*n*) **1.** a trip or journey in a vehicle
2. focused energy and motivation **3.** the means by which power is transferred in an engine **4.** a strong, organized group effort

Which definition gives the correct meaning for the word *drive* as it is used in the sentence from the passage?

Keesha wanted Tara on her team, but she wasn't sure her friend had the drive necessary to stick with such a challenging project.

- A** definition 1
- B** definition 2
- C** definition 3
- D** definition 4

In the context of this sentence, *drive* means personal motivation and energy, so **B** is the correct choice. The other choices suggest different uses/meanings of the word.

Study Ideas for Content Domain I

The best ways to prepare for questions assessing Content Domain I are to review the literary characteristics for all genres, read a variety of literary and informational works, and identify how the authors use language and apply literary techniques. As you read, ask yourself the kinds of questions described in this guide for Content Domain I and then try to answer them.

Here is a list of possible sources for appropriate reading passages:

- Anthologies of literature
- Short story collections
- Poetry collections
- Plays
- Informational articles in magazines and newspapers
- Biographies
- Autobiographies
- Books on how to do or make things

After you read the passage, ask yourself these questions:

- What is this passage about?
- What are its central ideas and themes?
- In what order do events occur in the passage? What happens first?
- Does imagery or symbolism suggest ideas and connections?
- How does the author use language to achieve a desired effect?
- Are there any words I don't know? Can I look at the language around unfamiliar words for context clues that suggest their meaning? Can I use the words' structures to determine meaning? How does the dictionary define the words?
- (For fiction) What important events make up the plot? What is the conflict in the passage? Who are the characters and what are their personality traits? How do the characters change, develop, and interact with each other over the course of the story? How does the setting affect the plot or theme of the story? Who is the narrator of the passage? Is the narrator a character in the passage? What is the effect of the point of view on the reader's understanding of the story?
- (For drama) What type of dramatic literature is the passage? Who are the characters? What does their dialogue and actions reveal about their beliefs and motivations? What are the play's themes? What types of dramatic conventions (such as lighting, scenery, dramatic irony, etc.) does the playwright use? How does the use of these conventions affect the reader or viewer of the play?
- (For poetry) What is this poem about? Who is the speaker? What specific details help readers understand the meaning of the poem? What types of sound devices does the poet use? How is the poem structured? How does the poem's structure effect or contribute to its theme?
- (For nonfiction) What is the purpose of this work? How is the passage structured? What details in the passage support the author's points or provide evidence of the author's ideas? How does the author use language to convey a central idea?

Find more passages and repeat this process as many times as possible. Be sure to read fiction poetry, drama, and a variety of informational texts. The more you practice reading passages and asking questions and answering them, the better you will do on the EOCT.

Sample Questions for Content Domain I

This section has some sample questions for you to try. Before you answer them, take a few minutes to learn about some strategies that you can use to help you do your best on a reading test.

STRATEGIES FOR ANSWERING READING QUESTIONS

- 1. Review the test questions before reading the passage.** Reading the test questions (just the questions, not the answer choices) before reading the passage can help you focus on what you are trying to find in the passage to answer the questions. Next, read the passage. You can make notes in the test booklet as you read. When you think you have found some information that will help answer a question, make a note. Do not stop reading the passage to answer a question. After you have read the entire passage, you can go back and look at your notes and answer the questions.
- 2. Summarize the passage.** Next to each paragraph, write a brief note indicating what the paragraph is about. Use your notes like a road map to help you find the information you need to answer the questions.

Be sure to keep an eye on the time. Do not spend so much time taking notes on a passage that you don't have time to answer the questions.

- 3. Read ALL of the answer choices.** Look at each answer choice carefully. Before marking an answer, think to yourself: Is it the BEST choice? Where can I find this in the passage? What in the passage makes me think this is correct? Do not just mark the first answer choice that looks good.

Read this passage and answer the questions that follow.

Why Some Flowers Bloom at Night

- 1 When the earth was very young and all plants were just beginning to find their way, all flowers bloomed whenever they pleased. There were no rules about flowers waking up with the dawn and closing tightly at sunset. Day and night, all gardens bloomed equally.
- 2 Sun and Moon were at odds often during that time. Sun didn't understand why Moon sometimes appeared during the day. Moon was unhappy because Sun ruled every day, but Moon could only appear on some nights. They tried to settle their differences themselves, but their talks always gave way to arguments.
- 3 Sun's arguments revolved around his power. "I am much bigger than you, so I am more important. My heat makes the plants grow and the people happy. You should not be wandering into the sky during my time to shine," he said.
- 4 Moon argued about fairness. "It's not right that you get so much time in the sky, and I get so little. Yes, you give heat to the world, but I supply it with coolness and fresh breezes, which give people relief from their cares. I deserve to travel the sky whenever I want to."
- 5 The quarrelsome pair decided to submit their problem to a higher authority. Because they traveled through Sky, they asked for her advice.
- 6 After listening to Sun and Moon, Sky was not certain what to do. "I think that you both make good points," she said. "But I cannot decide between you. Find another way to settle this."
- 7 So Sun and Moon asked Clouds for advice. Clouds, too, stepped away from the problem. "No, we are not meant to be your judges. If we choose for Sun, Moon will never light our path during the night, and if we favor Moon, Sun will dry us up. Please find another way to settle your problem!"
- 8 Sun and Moon were barely speaking to each other by now. They spent so much time fighting that they forgot their jobs, and the Earth became still and dark. The flowers could not bloom in the darkness. Finally, the plants on the Earth began to protest.
- 9 "It's too cold here," said the marigolds.
- 10 "Yes, we miss Sun," called out the roses.
- 11 The tulips and daffodils also spoke for Sun, "Sun's warmth always wakes us up from our winter sleep."
- 12 "That's true," said the four o'clocks, "but we miss the early moonlight."
- 13 "And I always wait for the evening breezes to send my sweet scent out," said the evening primrose.

- 14 One pale, nameless flower was most outspoken for Moon. “My silvery white flowers match the moon. I cannot imagine blooming if I cannot see the moon.”
- 15 Sun and Moon overheard the flowers’ complaints. “Perhaps the flowers can help us settle our quarrel,” they thought, so they asked the flowers to help them.
- 16 “It is in our best interest to settle this quarrel,” said a tall golden flower with a center full of seeds. The other flowers agreed. After listening to arguments for both Sun and Moon, the flowers decided they should vote on whether Sun or Moon should dominate the sky.
- 17 The tall golden flower ran to the front of the meeting. “I will be happy to count the votes. Bloom right now if you favor Sun, and please hold your bloom while I count.”
- 18 Because the flowers had not bloomed for such a long time, most of them could hardly wait to show their petals. The meeting place burst into color, and the golden flower spent most of the day counting the blossoms. By the time the votes were all counted, most of the flowers were tired and wilting on their stems.
- 19 Finally, the tall golden flower asked the flowers that favored Moon to show their blossoms. Due to the lateness of the day, only a few flowers, including the pale, nameless flower, showed their support of Moon.
- 20 The tall golden flower rushed to tell Sun about the victory. “You shall rule the sky!” the flower exclaimed.
- 21 “Because you have given me such great news, you shall be my special flower. From today on, you shall be known as Sunflower,” said Sun. As Sun spoke, the flowers that had voted for Sun nodded their heads in victory. Sun thanked them and said, “You shall bloom all day long because of your loyalty to me.”
- 22 The flowers that voted for Moon gathered about him. “We are so sorry for your loss,” the nameless white flower said.
- 23 “Don’t worry,” said Moon. “I’ll stay out of Sun’s way most of the time, but I’ll find a way to show up in the daytime sky when I think he’s not looking. And as thanks for your faithfulness, all of you flowers shall bloom at night. And you, my special friend,” he said to the silvery white flower, “you shall be called Moonflower. I will bathe you with light that will show your beautiful color at its finest.”
- 24 And that is why most flowers bloom during the day, but some flowers bloom only at night.

1 Which element of the passage contributes MOST to moving the plot forward?

- A the description of the setting
- B the narrator’s commentary and conclusions
- C the dialogue between the characters
- D the main character’s thoughts and feelings

Answer: **C**

Standard: *Use knowledge of literary characteristics to demonstrate understanding of a variety of texts.*

The characters (Sun, Moon, flowers) are given human characteristics. Their comments, complaints, and decisions establish the conflict, move the plot forward, and bring the story to conclusion. Choice **C** is the correct answer. Choices A, B, and D are also examples of literary elements, but they do not affect the plot as strongly as the dialogue does.

2 How do the flowers help to develop the theme of democracy in the passage?

- A by showing loyalty to a single strong leader
- B by representing the common people in a culture
- C by forming an authority that makes decisions for others
- D by representing opposite opinions for debate

Answer: **B**

Standard: *Analyze the development of a theme or idea throughout the course of the text, using specific details to support analysis.*

Choices A, C, and D are not essential elements of a democracy (a system in which laws and decisions are made with representation of the whole community). Choice **B** is the best description of how the flowers represent the common people in a culture or community through conversation, meetings, and a vote, so **B** is the correct answer.

Read this passage and answer the questions that follow.

How Do You Build a Better Mouse?

- 1 As you read this, human factors engineers are at work trying to figure out ways to make our lives and work easier and more comfortable. Ergonomics, or human factors engineering, is the study of how humans interact with their world and their work environment. Why are some chairs more comfortable to work in? What is the best height for a keyboard to prevent neck and arm strain? What is the best height for one's countertop workspace? The study of ergonomics seeks to answer these and other questions.
- 2 The inspiration to study ergonomics began late in the 1940s. Technology was advancing in many areas: transportation, household appliances, communications, and entertainment. The first computers were in their infancy. Scientists often developed inventions and improvements, however, without taking into account the people factor: the physical interaction of the human being with the machine. As a result, the safety and effectiveness of these new technologies was limited until designers began to consider such human variables as size, range of motion, visual acuity, and age in relation to the product itself. Thus, ergonomics was born.
- 3 One of the first ergonomic inquiries was the study of a lathe in a factory. A lathe is used for cutting designs into tubular wood or metal objects like the leg of a table. Engineers studied the relative positions of the controls on the lathe. They discovered that the lathe seemed to be designed for a person 4 ½ feet tall, with an arm span of 8 feet. The lathe operator had to stop and stoop down in order to manipulate the controls. They knew that if they could make the lathe easier to use, operators would experience fewer injuries and would become more productive.
- 4 No matter how they redesigned the lathe, it would not be perfect for everyone, but the goal of ergonomics is to maximize the comfort and productivity for as many people as possible. *Anthropometry* is the study of the variability in size, shape, and strength of people. Human factors engineers use anthropometric tables to improve the physical fit between people and the things they use, from hand tools to machinery to airplane cockpit designs.
- 5 Sometimes ergonomics are used to improve the designs of products that we already have, and sometimes the study of ergonomics leads to the development of completely new products. One such product is the computer mouse. Doug Engelbart came up with the idea for the first mouse in the early 1960s when he was a research scientist at Stanford Research Institute in Menlo Park, California.
- 6 Engelbart was assigned to a major project whose broadly stated purpose was to “augment human intellect.” Basically, scientists were asked to develop as many ideas as possible to enable human beings to solve complex problems more efficiently and more creatively. At the time computers were just becoming essential technological tools in government and industry. One of Engelbart's tasks was to improve the interaction between the computer and the user so that science could take full advantage of a computer's capabilities.

- 7 At first, scientists tested several devices such as the light pen, joysticks, and even a knee pedal, which provided control similar to the foot pedal controlling acceleration on a car. To decide which device was superior, they designed a series of simple tasks such as moving the cursor on the screen from one object to the next. They then timed a group of volunteers to perform these tasks using a variety of input devices. The light pen took too much time because the user has to reach to pick it up each time. The mouse was clearly superior.
- 8 The first mouse was simple, with two discs mounted perpendicularly. The user could then move it vertically or horizontally. Most of today's mice are still mechanical but contain a round ball in the base that allows the user to move the cursor quickly in any direction. Human factors engineers have also redesigned the shape to be comfortable for the human hand. They have also added two buttons to allow for quick access to computer functions.
- 9 The mouse is just one example of the myriad ways that ergonomics has improved our work and our lives. So the next time you pick up a phone, sit in a chair, or push a grocery cart, know that an ergonomic engineer has studied how people perform countless tasks and worked diligently to make these tasks easier and more comfortable to complete.

3 What is the central idea of the passage?

- A Studies in the field of ergonomics have improved work and life for many people.
- B The computer mouse has become more complex since its invention.
- C The redesign of the lathe was a turning point in the development of ergonomics.
- D Students and office workers should sit up straight in their chairs.

Answer: **A**

Standard: *Determine the theme(s) or central idea(s) of a text; analyze the development of a theme or idea throughout the course of the text, using specific details to support analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.*

Choices B and C are discussed in the article, but neither is its main point. Choice D may be an unintended effect once students have read the article, but it's not the central idea. Choice A gives an overview of the main conclusion and correctly summarizes the central idea about ergonomics that the author presents.

4 In paragraph 6, what does the word *augment* mean?

- A condense
- B increase
- C energize
- D improve

Answer: **B**

Standard: *Understand and acquire new vocabulary and use it correctly.*

The option that gives the best definition of *augment* is choice **B**. To clarify the meaning of the word, look for context clues. First, read the sentence that contains the vocabulary word. What were the scientists asked to do? Their “purpose was to ‘augment human intellect.’” Now read the next sentence. It begins “Basically, . . .”, which suggests a clarification will follow. So what were the scientists asked to do? They were asked to find ways to “enable human beings to solve complex problems more efficiently and more creatively.”

Now look at the key parts of both sentences:

“augment human intellect” = “enable human beings to solve complex problems more efficiently and more creatively”

We know *intellect* is knowledge or understanding. How do humans solve complex problems? With their intellect. So, if the scientists help humans solve problem **more** efficiently and **more** creatively, then knowledge and understanding are being **increased**.

Choice A is a contrasted word. Choices C and D are close in meaning to *augment*, but neither is the best choice.

Read the following scene from a play and answer the questions that follow.

Excerpt from Act II, scene ii, of *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare

CAST:

ROMEO

JULIET

Set in Verona, Italy, *Romeo and Juliet* tells the story of two teenagers in love. Romeo is a member of the noble family Montague. At a party, he sees and immediately falls in love with Juliet, a member of the Capulet family, which is the enemy of the Montagues. In this scene, Romeo mistakenly ends up in the Capulet family orchard.

SCENE II. Capulet's orchard.

Enter ROMEO

ROMEO

He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

JULIET appears above at a window.

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?

It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,

Who is already sick and pale with grief,

That thou her maid art far more fair than she:

Be not her maid, since she is envious;

Her vestal livery is but sick and green

And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.

It is my lady, O, it is my love!

O, that she knew she were!

She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?

Her eye discourses; I will answer it.

I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:

Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,

Having some business, do entreat her eyes

To twinkle in their spheres till they return.

What if her eyes were there, they in her head?

The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,

As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven

Would through the airy region stream so bright

That birds would sing and think it were not night.

See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!

O, that I were a glove upon that hand,

That I might touch that cheek!

JULIET

Ay me!

ROMEO

She speaks:

O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head
As is a winged messenger of heaven
Unto the white-upturned wondering eyes
Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him
When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

5 Which line MOST strongly reveals the relationship between Romeo and Juliet in the passage?

- A “what light through yonder window breaks? / It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.”
- B “It is my lady, O, it is my love! / O, that she knew she were!”
- C “O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art / As glorious to this night, being o'er my head”
- D “As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven / Would through the airy region stream so bright”

Answer: **B**

Standard: *Cite specific evidence from a text to demonstrate understanding of what the text says explicitly and what can be inferred.*

Choices A, C, and D all reveal Romeo’s feelings for Juliet, but choice B most strongly reveals the status of their relationship. In the line, Romeo proclaims that Juliet is his love, but laments that she is unaware of his feelings for her (“O, that she knew she were!”) Choice B most clearly explains what the two characters are to each other.

6 The main conflict in the passage is between

- A Romeo and Juliet
- B Romeo and nature
- C Romeo and himself
- D Romeo and society

Answer: **C**

Standard: *Use knowledge of literary characteristics to demonstrate understanding of a variety of texts.*

Choices A, B, and D are all common conflicts, but none is the main conflict in this passage. Although Juliet is the other character in the scene, and Romeo's tortured feelings are caused by his love for her, he is not in conflict *with* her. The setting of the scene is in an orchard, but the conflict is not about the setting or Romeo's role in it. Later on in the play, both Romeo and Juliet are in conflict with society because of the family feud; however, that element does not appear in this scene. The correct answer is choice **C**; Romeo's conflict is with himself. His struggle comes from his feelings of love for Juliet, which he is not sure how to express and he worries will not be returned.

Read this poem and answer the questions that follow.

Daffodils

By William Wordsworth

I WANDER'D lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

- 7 The simile in lines 1 and 2 of “Daffodils” mostly describes the speaker’s**
- A dreams
 - B feelings**
 - C movements
 - D thoughts

Answer: **B**.

Standard: *Use knowledge of literary characteristics to demonstrate understanding of a variety of texts.*

The phrase “lonely as a cloud” is a direct comparison of the speaker’s emotions to the distant, solitary cloud.

- 8 In line 3, what does the poet achieve by referring to the daffodils as a “crowd”?**
- A sets an active and upbeat tone
 - B offers a neutral description of the setting**
 - C explains the reason for the speaker’s wandering
 - D introduces a solution to the speaker’s loneliness

Answer: **D**

Standard: *Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language and connotative meanings; analyze how word choice affects meaning and tone.*

The poet makes a deliberate choice in using the word “crowd,” a term not generally applied to a group of flowers. What comes to mind when you think of a crowd? When we say “the crowd dispersed” or “there was quite a crowd,” the assumption is of a crowd of people. Just before he sees the daffodils, the speaker feels lonely. The presence of the flowers as a “crowd” suggests that he has company; he is not alone. The positive language used to describe the daffodils in the rest of the poem suggests that the company is a welcome addition—diminishing his loneliness.

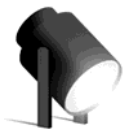
Content Domain II: Speaking and Listening

A LOOK AT CONTENT DOMAIN II



The test questions in this domain will measure your comprehension as you read, listen, speak, and view messages in a variety of media and formats. Your ability to evaluate the credibility, accuracy, and purpose of various messages will also be tested. Your answers to the questions will help show how well you can perform on the following standards:

- Evaluate a speaker's or writer's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
- Evaluate the credibility and accuracy of information sources.
- Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media and formats.
- Demonstrate the ability to adapt or enhance a message for the appropriate audience or purpose.
- Analyze the representation of a subject or key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment.
- Make strategic use of digital media to enhance presentations.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.
- Analyze how the cumulative impact of specific word choices affects meaning and tone.
- Acquire and use academic and subject-specific words and phrases.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Evaluate a speaker's or writer's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric. ★

Whether you realize it or not, you receive countless messages every day. A message can contain words, images, or both; it can be written, drawn, digitized, spoken, or sung. Whether it is a short text message from a friend, a famous painting in a museum, or a teacher's course description, many of the messages you "read" every day are meant to modify your thinking or influence your decisions.

When you see an advertisement for a product on television, it is clear that the purpose is to persuade you to buy the product. You may even notice specific methods and techniques that the advertisement uses to "hook you in." Do you feel extra hungry when the camera zooms in on a juicy burger just as the happy customer is about to take a bite? Do you imagine a new product making your hair look just as perfect as it does on the model that has just used it? Do you crave the admiration and compliments you would receive if you could drive around in the same car being praised by the famous sports star?

While it may be the most obvious example, advertising is not the only medium that uses messages to persuade. Book and movie reviews, letters of recommendation, newspaper editorials, concert posters, political blogs, town and city websites, statistical charts, scientific articles, speeches, and even bumper stickers all contain a degree of persuasive intent. Questions for this standard will ask you to determine the intent or point of view of a message, to analyze how language and word choice affects the message, and to evaluate the validity of evidence used to support the message.

The first part of this standard asks you to determine a writer's or speaker's point of view. In literary texts, point of view is a literary element with grammatical clues; for example, a text narrated by a speaker who uses the pronoun "I" is written in the first-person point of view. In this domain, point of view refers to the ideas, purpose, and beliefs of a writer or speaker. Sometimes called "position" or "perspective," you can think of point of view as "where the writer is coming from."

Questions for this part of the standard may look like these:

- **Which statement BEST summarizes the scientist's position regarding recent cutbacks in space exploration?**
- **What assumption about the audience is revealed in the advertisement?**

- **How does the speaker’s point of view change toward the end of the address?**

The second part of this standard tests your skill in locating and evaluating evidence to support claims and statements made in a variety of texts. To find evidence, you must “read like a detective.”

STRATEGY BOX—Become a Detective

Take a close look at the passage. What kind of support does the author offer? Does the author use personal examples, descriptive details, endorsements (testimonials), statistics, relevant research, facts, opinions, or hearsay as support? The kind of support tells a lot about how strong the argument is. For example, if the author uses a personal example to make a point about how well a medical procedure works, it is not as convincing as scientific research to support the claim.

Questions for this part of the standard will focus on the relationship between supporting evidence and conclusions. For example, an author may argue that a people with green skin live in the Australian Outback. You might be asked the following question:

Which statement would BEST support the author’s argument?

- A** Many aboriginal tribes in the Outback have dark blue tattoos.
- B** People visiting exotic places often imagine they see things.
- C** All the aborigines of the Outback have been researched.
- D** Scientists tell us that constant diets of dark green plants may cause skin to develop a hint of green color.

Since the author’s argument is “that people with green skin really exist,” ask yourself which answer choice helps support this conclusion. The answer choice that helps support this conclusion will be the correct answer. In this case, “Scientists tell us that constant diets of dark green plants may cause skin to develop a hint of green color.” helps support the claim that something never seen before—people with green skin—actually exists. The correct answer is choice **D**.

Assessing Rhetoric

The last part of this standard asks you to closely examine how words are chosen and language is crafted in a variety of messages.

When text or speech is notably powerful, beautiful, or persuasive, we can say that its **rhetoric** is effective. Rhetoric consists of language choices and techniques that writers use to communicate perspective and to modify the perspectives of others. You may have heard the expression “it’s not *what* you say; it’s *how* you say it.” Rhetoric is about *how* ideas are presented and messages are delivered.

Rhetoric is developed through many of the elements of literature and language covered in Domain I, such as sound devices (e.g., alliteration, repetition, or rhyme), structure (e.g., foreshadowing, climax, or resolution), figurative language (e.g., hyperbole, idioms, or metaphor), and tone (e.g., humble, arrogant, hesitant, or demanding).

Questions for this part of the standard may ask you to explain the effect of certain word choices, and to locate and analyze evidence of effective rhetoric.

Read the following excerpt from a television advertisement.

Did you know there’s a place you can go to see million-year-old popcorn, bacon, and soda straws? How about a giant version of Babe Ruth’s baseball bat? Or a miniature version of the Empire State Building? It’s not a museum or movie set—it’s Lewis and Clark Caverns, a natural limestone cave in southwestern Montana.

How does the language used in this advertisement contribute to the overall tone?

- A Unusual questions suggest playfulness.
- B Formal sentences suggest authority.
- C Scientific terms suggest believability.
- D Lighthearted joking suggests secretiveness.

In the excerpt, the unexpected and unusual images suggest a sense of playfulness intended to make viewers curious about the place being advertised, so the correct answer is choice **A**. Choices **B** and **C** are incorrect because the language is not formal and the terms are not scientific. The language is casual and humorous, but does not suggest a secret, so choice **D** is also incorrect.

Types of Arguments

We're not talking about the type of argument where you disagree with someone over who took the last cookie or the last parking space. We're talking about how ads try to persuade you to buy something. Their arguments are facts or assertions offered as proof that something is true. Here are some common types of arguments:

Argument by authority—relies on statements from authority figures, experts, or professionals to convince you of something. For example, an advertisement claiming that “three out of four dentists agree that this toothpaste is the best” is an argument by authority.

Argument by emotion—appeals to your feelings. Relief organizations often show pictures of people in very unfortunate situations to move you to donate money.

Argument by logic—appeals to reason and evidence to convince you of something. For example, “People who have used our product have lost weight. You want to lose weight. If you buy this product, you will lose weight.” Beware of false logic, however. Just because some people buy a product and lose weight does not mean the product was responsible. That's why weight loss ads often warn people that the results of their models are not typical.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ *Evaluate the credibility and accuracy of information sources.* ★

Questions for this standard may ask you which source would provide the most accurate and reliable information. You should be prepared to judge the authority of *providers* of information (especially online sources), and you should be prepared to evaluate the authenticity and accuracy of the information they provide.

A **credible** source is one you can trust to present accurate, unbiased information. Having studied the previous standard, you will be able to assess the point of view and purpose of different types of sources. You will be skeptical of sources that may manipulate facts and language for the purpose of promoting their own point of view.

One way to review for this standard is to select a significant current event or issue over which there is debate or disagreement. Read or watch everything you can about

the issue. How does the coverage differ among sources? What facts and details are included, or not included, depending on the point of view of the source? How accurate is the information delivered in a daily, deadline-driven newspaper compared with the information in a monthly magazine that allows more time for research and fact checking?

One way to evaluate the credibility of a source is to do some investigation of your own. For example, you may read a scientific report that claims to have found a link between a new energy drink and improved athletic endurance. By reading “the fine print” (footnotes, end notes, citations, and acknowledgements) of the article, you just may discover that funding for the research was provided by the company that produces the very energy drink used in the study. Your discovery reveals a potential bias in the source and should lead you to question the fairness and completeness of the information presented. Another example of questionable credibility would be a website that publishes that same “scientific report” but also includes advertisements for the energy drink or links to online retailers selling the product.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ *Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media and formats.* ★

Although the EOCT does not require you to write a report, you will need to use your skills and knowledge of writing to answer some questions. For example, when planning a report or presentation, you would likely gather information presented in diverse formats. Depending on your topic, you may have pictures, interviews, videos, charts, and graphs, in addition to written text. To answer questions in this standard, you will need to consider how to **integrate** (combine or bring together) information presented by different sources and in different formats. You will need to choose what information to keep, what to leave out, and which formats work best for your purpose.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ ***Demonstrate the ability to adapt or enhance a message for the appropriate audience or purpose.*** ★

Assessing Mass Media

Just as you evaluated written passages in Domain I, you are asked here to assess the effectiveness of different forms of communication. But how do you evaluate the different forms? In much the same way you evaluated literary passages. You will look for evidence that the movie, website, or advertisement made its point. As you watch a movie or a television program or read a website, ask yourself the following questions:

- √ Is the style right for the message?
- √ Am I getting all the information I need, or am I confused about the message?
- √ Is the presentation clear?

If the answer to any of these questions is “no,” you should be prepared to explain what changes could strengthen the message and adapt it to its purpose and audience.

You should pay attention to how an advertisement, film, or website looks. Part of its effectiveness depends on how the visual aspects appeal to you. You are told not to judge a book by its cover, but it is okay to judge a website by the layout of its home page. It’s okay to judge a print advertisement for a new CD on how the image’s background increases your desire to buy it.

Just as you evaluated the diction and tone of the literary passages in Domain I, you should evaluate the word choices and tone used in media presentations. Is the formal level of speech in that news broadcast appropriate? Should a more informal tone be used in taped interviews?

Because the EOCT is a written test, you will not be asked to watch or listen to media broadcasts. You will be given written passages such as advertisements, newspaper articles, and pages from websites. Questions for this part of the standard may look like the following:

Use this Web page to answer the questions that follow.

STAY OFF, STAY AWAY, STAY ALIVE

Train and Track Safety for Pedestrians

NEVER walk on or near railroad tracks. **TRACKS ARE FOR TRAINS.**

NEVER leave your bicycle or other objects on the track.

NEVER throw anything at a train.

NEVER get in or walk around a railroad car parked on the tracks. It can move suddenly without any warning.

NEVER climb on or between standing railroad cars or take a short cut by crawling under them. It can be very hard to hear a far-away engine that might move the train.

NEVER get on, walk across, or fish from a railroad bridge. There are no sidewalks for you to move to if a train comes. The train does not generally blow the whistle at the bridge.

NEVER walk into a railroad tunnel. Tunnels are only wide enough for the train itself and a train can come at anytime.

NEVER stand next to a moving train. You never know what might shoot out from under the wheels of the train.

[Home Sweet Home](#)

[Schoolhouse](#)

[Camp RRC](#)

[RRC Park](#)

[Ask the Commissioners](#)

[Grownups' Resources](#)

[Spotlight on Kids](#)

[Resources](#)

[What's Cool](#)

For which audience is this Web page mostly intended?

- A children
- B parents
- C police
- D teachers

From the tone of the text and some specific clues (such as the words *toys* and *kids*) you can tell that this Web page is intended for children, so the correct answer is choice **A**. The topic is intended for those who may not be aware of train safety. Parents, police, and teachers are likely to already know these safety rules.

Which section of the Web page provides additional information about the topic?

- A the subtitle
- B the bold words
- C the paragraphs
- D the smaller box

The correct choice is **D**. The smaller box contains Web links (indicated by the underlined subject names) that can be clicked on to find out more about this and related topics. None of the other choices led to additional information not already visible on the page.

What feature of this Web page MOST helps convey its message?

- A the boxed outline
- B the repeated words
- C the capitalized title
- D the additional links

The Web page gets its point across by repeating commands, so the correct answer is choice **B**. The word *stay* is repeated in the title and the word *never* is repeated in the body of the text. The other choices are features that help organize the information, but no choice is more prominent than choice B—the repeated words.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Analyze the representation of a subject or key scene in two different artistic media, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment. ★

Authors are sometimes inspired by other media besides the one they are working in, or they coincidentally write about the same subject an artist has painted a picture about. This is not surprising because artists of all media address common themes and central ideas. Poetry about war and heroism, *The Iliad*, for example, can be compared and/or contrasted to Greek sculptors' expression of heroism, or photography of more modern wars. Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, as a play, can be compared and contrasted to a movie interpretation of the same play. Dorothea Lange's photography of the Depression expresses much of what John Steinbeck writes about in his novel *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Questions for this standard may look like these:

- **How is the view of war different in the painting by Delacroix of *Liberty Leading the People* and in the short story by Ambrose Bierce, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"?**
- **Which recurring theme from the homesteader's journal is emphasized in the artist's painting?**



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Make strategic use of digital media to enhance presentations. ★

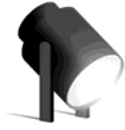
Speakers sometimes include digital media to provide additional information to the reader. The digital media may simply be an outline of what he or she is presenting or photographs showing the subject. Sometimes digital media is used to reinforce what the speaker has been saying by providing a well-known authority on the

topic; other times it is a demonstration of what the speaker has been talking about. There are, in fact, many ways digital media can enhance a presentation.

On the EOCT you will not be required to make a presentation. However, you will likely be asked to evaluate a presentation, whether it be video or a script, that includes a description of a digital medium.

Questions may look like these:

- **What value is added by the inclusion of a PowerPoint slide providing an outline of the presentation?**
- **Which digital medium described below would BEST support the presenter’s central idea?**



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how word choice affects meaning and tone. ★

Just as authors of literary works use figurative and connotative language, speakers use such language to convey implicit messages, i.e., without stating the point directly. Items written for this standard will test your understanding that certain words and phrases can be used in many different mediums and subject areas. The information provided in Domain 1 (see pages 36 and 37) will help you here as you analyze persuasive texts and presentations, historical materials, and technical documents. Sometimes figurative language and the repetition of phrases are used to make an idea memorable because words are spoken rather than written. Figurative language and repetition in speech also emphasize ideas so there is little doubt about what is meant.

Items written for this standard will test your understanding of a speaker’s attempt to convey meaning to the listener through the use of specific words. Some questions will test the strategies you have developed to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and concepts using context clues. These may be especially important in reading technical writing with unfamiliar technical vocabulary.

Questions for this standard will be associated with texts that address the domain of speaking and listening. You may read and view advertisements, presentations, editorials, speeches, position papers, and texts written in specific subject areas.

Questions related to word choice may look like the following:

- **How do the candidate’s examples criticize her opponent without referring to him by name?**
- **To what audience does the speaker appeal by repeatedly referring to his family’s traditions?**
- **What point of view is indicated by the researcher’s shift from using the term “agrarian culture” to using “land-based economy”?**



Spotlight on the Standards

★ ***Acquire and use general academic and subject-specific words and phrases.*** ★

Items written for this standard will test your understanding that certain words and concepts can be used in many different mediums and subject areas. Some questions will test the strategies you have developed to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and concepts.

Context, the part of a text that surrounds a particular word and determines its meaning, is helpful in identifying the meaning of words that are being used in different subjects. For example, in science class, the word *revolution* refers to a planet’s complete turn around the Sun. In social studies class, the word *revolution* refers to a complete upheaval in government or society. The context of the passage will help you decide which meaning is appropriate in the passage. What other words do you know whose meanings differ significantly based on the context? Making a list will help you review for this standard.

Study Ideas for Content Domain II

The best way to prepare for questions for this content domain is to read a wide variety of informative and persuasive texts, watch television, and surf the Internet. Can you think of a better way to study for a test? This isn't just fun and games, though.

Remember that you need to read, watch, and surf with a critical eye.

As you read anything—magazines, cereal boxes, greeting cards, textbooks, or bumper stickers—make a mental note of any unfamiliar word. Can you figure out its meaning by the context? Have you encountered this word in a different context? As you watch commercials and read ads, try to determine the intended audience (e.g., children, teenagers, adults, women, or men) and what approach is used (e.g., “if you use this product, you will be popular” or “a famous athlete likes this product, so you will too”). As you watch television news, listen to the tone and style of the presenters. Do the anchors adjust their speech to fit the topic? As you read websites or news magazines, try to figure out the author's purpose for writing the material. Why did the author use that particular format? Paying attention as you do things that you enjoy may help you do well on the EOCT.

Sample Questions for Content Domain II

This section has some sample questions for you to answer. After you have answered each question, the correct answer will be provided as well as an explanation about why the other answer choices are incorrect.

The content below appears on a website about Chinese American authors. It appears under the biography section.

Jeanne M. Lee

- 1 Jeanne M. Lee grew up enjoying the folktales of her native Vietnam. As an author and an artist, she recreates these folktales for American children today. *Ba-Nam* is a story based on her childhood experiences celebrating Thanh-Minh (tan-min) with her family. Thanh-Minh is the holiday of the dead, a sort of Vietnamese Memorial Day.
- 2 In the *Legend of the Li River: An Ancient Chinese Tale*, Lee recounts the story of how the Li River was created. A sea princess wished to give something back to the people who were building the Great Wall of China, so she created the beautiful river for them to gaze upon while they worked. Lee is known for the tranquility and the simplicity of her art and her writings. Her stories melt into her illustrations from page to page like a Chinese screen painting, creating a unique visual experience for the readers.

1 Which line from the biography uses language that MOST reveals the point of view of the author?

- A “*Ba-Nam* is a story based on her childhood experiences celebrating Thanh-Minh (tan-min) with her family.”
- B “In the *Legend of the Li River: An Ancient Chinese Tale*, Lee recounts the story of how the Li River was created.”
- C “Lee is known for the tranquility and simplicity of her art and her writings.”
- D “Her stories melt into her illustrations from page to page like a Chinese screen painting . . .”

Answer: **D**

Standard: *Evaluate a speaker’s or writer’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.*

Choices A and B are straightforward and factual. There is little, if any, of the writer’s ideas or impressions in the language. Choice C characterizes Lee’s work, but remains neutral in stating a general feature of her art and writing. Choice **D** is the correct

answer because it reveals the author’s point of view by using imagery and figurative language that suggests an emotional reaction and interpretation of Lee’s art.

2 What additional information is needed to understand why the content about Lee appears on a website about Chinese American authors?

- A She was born to Chinese parents and later moved to the United States.
- B She moved to the United States from Vietnam and wrote about China.
- C China and Vietnam are both part of Asia.
- D Folktales are the same throughout Asia.

Answer: **A**

Standard: *Evaluate a speaker’s or writer’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.*

The correct answer is Choice **A**, which provides the necessary information. Lee appears on a website of Chinese American authors because she was born to Chinese parents and now lives in the United States. Adding this information also clears up any confusion about why she writes about China. Choice B explains why Lee is an American but not why she is a Chinese American. Choices C and D are incorrect answers because they do not clarify Lee’s background.

3 Based on the context provided in paragraph 2, the reader can infer that *tranquility* means

- A the state of being calm
- B the use of vivid colors
- C precise technique
- D dissatisfaction

Answer: **A**

Standard: *Acquire and use academic and subject-specific words and phrases.*

The correct answer is Choice **A**. Sentence 6 establishes that Lee’s works are soothing. Gazing at the water is a peaceful activity. The word *simplicity* reinforces this idea. Choice D is the opposite of *tranquility*. Choices B and C are incorrect answers because they do not fit in a context of simplicity.

Content Domain III: Writing

A LOOK AT CONTENT DOMAIN III



The test questions in this domain will measure your ability to recognize coherent and focused writing. Your answers to the questions will help show how well you can perform on the following standards:

- Organize a clear and coherent writing sample.
- Demonstrate knowledge of coherent and accurate informational and technical writing.
- Use knowledge of research techniques to support writing.
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

Learning to become a good writer takes many years and lots of practice. Writing is a complex process that involves numerous different elements, such as different types of text and their purposes, organizing and developing writing, using research and research tools. Understanding these elements can help you become a better writer, and that is the purpose of Content Domain III. While this domain cannot cover every aspect of writing, it does cover many of the major elements of writing that are important for you to understand.

Since the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT* is a multiple-choice test, you will not have to do any actual writing. Instead, many of the questions in this domain will provide you with samples of writing, and your task will be to distinguish the good writing from the poor writing, or to make poor writing better. Some of the questions will present a single sentence for you to evaluate, while others will present a short passage. After reading the sentences or passages, you may be asked to answer questions like these:

- **What is the BEST way to revise the first sentence of paragraph 2 to maintain a formal tone?**
- **Which sentence would go BEST at the beginning of the article?**
- **Which sentence does NOT belong in the researched essay?**

When you come across these questions, remind yourself that the key to answering them is to distinguish the good writing from the poor writing. Overall, you want to make sure the writing in the passage is precise, well organized, and easy to understand.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ *Organize a clear and coherent writing sample.* ★

Even though this standard is one of the shortest on the EOCT, it may also be one of the most difficult for students. For this standard, you must be able to apply what you know about grammar, word usage, and style. Although you will not be required to create an organized writing sample that is appropriate for an audience, that maintains a coherent focus throughout, and that signals closure at the end, you will be tested on a variety of sentences or short passages, from letters, reports, essays, student journals, and newspaper articles. Questions will ask you to analyze, evaluate, and improve the sentences or passages by selecting the correct change from options provided.

Most people write because they have something to say, a purpose, what the writer wants to accomplish by writing. Journalists write newspaper articles to inform readers about a particular event. Nonfiction writers create pieces to inform readers and to stimulate their thoughts. Even a simple journal entry is written for a reason.

The central idea of a piece of writing is often called the **thesis**. Sometimes the thesis is stated very clearly. For example, suppose you are reading an article titled “Why Getting Nine Hours of Sleep Is Good for Teens.” Most likely, the central idea of this article is that getting an ample amount of sleep each night is important for teenagers. It is the author’s job to provide sufficient information to show the reader that the central idea has merit. To do this, the author must use supporting ideas and examples as evidence for support.

Understanding the central idea (thesis) is crucial to understanding a passage. It would be hard to understand the article about sleep and teens without realizing that the central idea of the article is that getting at least nine hours of sleep each night is good for teens. (You may not *agree* with the central idea, but you do have to *understand* it.) You would be missing the point of the article if you did not understand the thesis correctly.

Tips for Finding the Central Idea and Subordinate Ideas

The questions for this standard will be based on informational passages. (See the short sample titled “Vegetarian Pizza—A Healthy Alternative” on page 74 or look at the passage “How Do You Build a Better Mouse?” on pages 48–49 for a longer example.)

Authors of informational or technical texts often use a traditional outline to plan their writing. They may first state the central idea they want to get across and then address all the supporting ideas, leaving the reader with an impression, a prediction, or a pondering thought about the central idea. See the example outline in the box.

From this outline, it is clear that the central idea is “writers should take advantage of the different resources available to them.” The central idea for this paper will most likely be in the thesis sentence of the introductory paragraph. Each paragraph will support the central idea by identifying a category of resources (e.g., the Internet) and then giving specific information about it.

The **central idea** can often be found in one or more of these places:

- The title
- The thesis statement
- The conclusion

The **subordinate**, or supporting, ideas of a passage can often be found in one or both of these places:

- The topic sentence of each paragraph
- The body paragraphs

In a well-written passage, you should find evidence to support main and subordinate ideas. This evidence may include

- Anecdotes
- Descriptions
- Facts
- Statistics
- Expert Statements

OUTLINE

Title: Options for Research

Thesis: There are many different resources you can use when researching a topic.

- I. The library has more than books
 - a. Magazines
 - b. Reference materials
 - c. AV materials
 - d. Internet access
- II. What’s on the Web
 - a. Academic sites
 - b. News sites
 - c. Company sites
 - d. Personal sites
- III. Interview the experts
 - a. Scholars in the field
 - b. Professionals

Concluding statement: When researching a topic, take advantage of the many resources available.

The Secrets of Organization

A gifted writer knows that there are many ways to organize and develop information. Different topics require different strategies. Some of the more common ways to organize a passage include the following:

- Chronological order
- Cause and effect
- Comparison and contrast
- Asking and answering questions

A writer's choice depends on the point he or she wants to make. An informational report, for example, may start with "How can you conserve energy?" and then be followed by the answer in a series of well-supported paragraphs.

The questions on the EOCT that address the meaning, interpretation, or evidence in a passage may look like these:

- **Which would be the best topic for the essay?**
- **Which sentence would be the BEST conclusion for the essay?**
- **What information would be the BEST to add to the essay?**

Questions for this standard will often be preceded by a short essay. You can use the same approach for these shorter essays that you would for a regular full-length reading passage. Start by looking over the essay to find the central idea. Then use this information to help you answer the questions. The questions may ask you to determine the best topic sentence (e.g., one that introduces a topic or idea) or concluding sentence (e.g., one that summarizes a topic or idea), identify a sentence that is out of sequence or one that is extraneous or unrelated to the topic, or identify the organizational structure of the passage. Try these techniques on the student draft of an essay on the next page.

Vegetarian Pizza—A Healthy Alternative

Eating healthy meals is easier than you may think! There are many healthy and nutritious meals that are easy to prepare. One great idea is to make a vegetarian pizza. There are many ingredients that can be used to make this wonderful treat. Fresh vegetables are, of course, the secret of this very special pizza, including zucchini and yellow squash, fresh sliced tomatoes, chopped garlic (if desired), or any other fresh vegetables of your choice. When placed on prepared whole-wheat pizza crust spread with a vegetarian pizza sauce and sprinkled with low-fat mozzarella cheese, you have a healthy and nutritious alternative to many other pizzas that are high in calories and fat. The best thing about this meal is that it is delicious! Another great healthy meal is grilled chicken salad. Your vegetarian pizza will also contain excellent nutritional content.

Per slice, your vegetarian pizza will contain approximately 320 calories, 5 grams of saturated fat, 23 mg of cholesterol, 220 mg of sodium, 37 grams of carbohydrate, and 16 grams of protein. As opposed to many other meal options, vegetarian pizza is a wise choice for anyone who is committed to good nutrition and a healthy body. Why not try a vegetarian pizza today?

Which statement BEST states the thesis of this passage?

- A One healthy meal choice is a vegetarian pizza.
- B Healthy meals can be easy and delicious.
- C Whole-wheat pizza dough is a healthy alternative.
- D People should maintain a healthy diet.

For this question, your objective is to determine the central idea of the passage. Are the paragraphs mostly about various kinds of healthy foods? They are actually more specific than that, so choices B and D are too general to act as a good thesis for the passage. This leaves choices A and C. Choice C is certainly part of the passage, but choice A is more closely related to all of the content. Therefore, choice A is the BEST answer.

Which sentence should be moved to the second paragraph and used as its topic sentence?

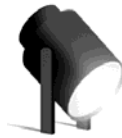
- A “Eating healthy meals is easier than you may think!”
- B “There are many ingredients that can be used to make this wonderful treat.”
- C “When placed on prepared whole-wheat pizza crust spread with a vegetarian pizza sauce and sprinkled with low-fat mozzarella cheese, you have a healthy and nutritious alternative to many other pizzas that are high in calories and fat.”
- D “Your vegetarian pizza will also contain excellent nutritional content.”

For this question, the objective is to find the sentence in the first paragraph that can serve as the topic sentence for the second paragraph. Paragraph 2 details the nutritional facts about vegetarian pizza and then sums up the entire passage. Since a well-developed paragraph states its purpose and groups similar ideas together, moving the last sentence of the first paragraph to the start of the second paragraph makes the most sense. Therefore, the correct answer is choice **D**.

Which sentence does NOT support the central idea of the passage?

- A** “Eating healthy meals is easier than you may think!”
- B** “Fresh vegetables are, of course, the secret of this very special pizza, including zucchini and yellow squash, fresh sliced tomatoes, chopped garlic (if desired), or any other fresh vegetables of your choice.”
- C** “Another great healthy meal is grilled chicken salad.”
- D** “As opposed to many other meal options, vegetarian pizza is a wise choice for anyone who is committed to good nutrition and a healthy body.”

For this question, having a clear idea of the thesis will help you identify inappropriate information that is not directly related to the subject of the passage. Choices A and B give specific details related to the central idea. Choice D is also related to the central idea since it states a clear reason for eating a vegetarian pizza. The information regarding grilled chicken salad is not related to vegetarian pizza. Therefore, choice **C** is the correct answer.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Demonstrate knowledge of coherent and accurate informational and technical writing. ★

This standard builds on the previous standard. Questions for this standard will ask you to choose the best sentences to use to engage an audience, develop a controlling idea, summarize a passage, or provide detailed information in a style and tone that are appropriate for the intended audience. Some of the passages that you will be asked to read are informational passages. Examples of informational passages include reports, magazine articles, or informative essays. Other passages you will be asked to read are technical passages. Examples of technical passages include consumer and workplace documents, such as letters, warranties, memorandums, user manuals, Internet sites, and advertisements. You may also be tested on appropriate style conventions for documents such as business letters and memoranda.

Informational

To prepare for this section, you should review the information in this study guide about organizational patterns, thesis statements, and central ideas. You should also take a look ahead to the next standard, which reviews research techniques.

STRATEGY BOX—Choose the BEST Answer

As you take the EOCT, you may come across answers that seem pretty close to the one you had in mind. Caution—read all of the answer choices before you mark your final answer! You need to find the BEST answer, and it may be the last one given. All of the answer choices on the EOCT should sound somewhat reasonable, but there is only ONE correct answer.

Technical

This section of the standard covers the different strategies used in technical writing. To prepare for this section, you will first want to become familiar with the different types of technical writing—such as business letters, proposals, memoranda, warranties, and even Web pages. These different kinds of technical writing require using a variety of formats, as well as different levels of formal and informal language.

Try to imagine the intended audience for a particular piece of writing. Was it written for a particular group of people who share a common interest, or is its target audience the general public? Determining who the intended audience is can help you understand the purpose of the writing.

Understanding the audience also helps you identify language that is appropriate for the situation. For example, a school memo about a talent contest will likely use less formal language than would a book review published in a professional magazine.

Generally speaking, you should be able to distinguish between formal and informal language. Typically, formal language is more grammatically precise and contains longer sentences and more elaborate wording. In contrast, informal language is not always grammatically accurate, and it may include slang words and phrases.

The following chart compares formal and informal language.

Informal	Formal
Dude! You've got to hear this song!	The sound quality of the model TX is unsurpassed in the industry.
No way, no how, can you beat our sale prices!	The results of the survey indicate that consumer spending has dropped over the last six months.
I just heard the most awesome news about Janet.	We have just learned from our sources in the White House that a major political figure is about to resign.

STRATEGY BOX—Who Is Your Audience?

Using language that is appropriate for a given situation often involves deciding on whether formal or informal language should be used. You always need to think about the situation and audience. The goal is to match the formality of the situation and audience with the formality of the writing.

Knowing the target audience is particularly important when you are evaluating technical documents such as advertisements. The images, text, and sound that are included in an advertisement will influence how successful the ad will be. Questions on the EOCT may ask you to identify the purpose of pictures used in an advertisement or to identify the most appropriate language for an effective ad.

Good technical writers adjust their vocabulary, style, and tone to fit their intended audiences. They also present their information in a format most readers will recognize. The page layout, font, and spacing you use can make your document easier to read. You will be tested on your ability to recognize the appropriate style for technical documents. Questions for this standard may look like the following (see next page):

Read this letter and answer the following questions.

Joseph Pena, President
WXYZ Television

Hi Joe,

I am very interested in a summer internship with your station. My previous experience makes me an ideal candidate and will fit well with your needs. I have done the lighting and worked as a stage hand for the Midland High School drama club. I am eager to gain experience working with cameras.

Your job posting said you would notify applicants of your decision by June 1. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Chandra Byrnes

Which line is too informal for the letter?

- A Hi Joe,
- B I have done the lighting and worked as a stage hand for the Midland High School drama club.
- C I look forward to hearing from you.
- D Sincerely,

Answer: **A**

Standard: *Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.*

In this example, choice **A** is too informal. A letter sent along with a job application should address the employer formally: "Dear Mr. Pena." The other lines are all appropriate for the context of the letter.

Read these sentences from the letter.

I have done the lighting and worked as a stage hand for the Midland High School drama club. I am eager to gain experience working with cameras.

How are these sentences BEST combined?

- A** I am eager to gain experience working with cameras since I have done the lighting and worked as a stage hand for the Midland High School drama club.
- B** I am eager to gain experience working with cameras, I have done the lighting and worked as a stage hand for the Midland High School drama club.
- C** I have done the lighting and worked as a stage hand for the Midland High School drama club and I am eager to gain experience working with cameras.
- D** I have done the lighting and worked as a stage hand for the Midland High School drama club, but I am eager to gain experience working with cameras.

Answer: **D**

Standard: *Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.*

The correct answer, choice **D**, is the smoothest combination of the two sentences. Choice A is incorrect because its meaning is unclear. Choice B is incorrect because it contains a comma splice: a comma is incorrectly used to separate two sentences. Choice C is incorrect because it is a run-on sentence.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Use knowledge of research techniques to support writing. ★

Questions for this standard will test your ability to choose the best sources and methods for researching a particular topic. You will also be asked how to add quotations and documented citations into a text using appropriate conventions.

The research process refers to many different steps related to finding information. Roughly speaking, it means going to appropriate resources (e.g., the library or the Internet) with a question and finding a way to answer it. Although the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT* is an English test, the focus is not necessarily on the kind of research you would do for an English assignment. The focus is on the skills that you can use for any of your subjects. The research process can be broken into several steps, as shown below.

Some Steps in the Research Process

1. Deciding on a Topic. When determining a topic for a paper, be sure to keep the scope within a reasonable range. Many students pick topics that are far too broad to cover in the number of pages they have been assigned. For instance, they may decide to write a three-page paper on “American inventors in the Twentieth Century.” This topic is too broad for a three-page paper (or even a three-volume series). It would be better to pick a single inventor, like George Washington Carver, for your paper. Three pages are enough for a very brief introduction to Carver’s life and major inventions. Students can also experience the opposite problem—a topic that is too narrow in scope. For example, it would probably be very difficult to write three pages about Carver’s first pet. The EOCT may ask you to select the best research topic among several choices. You would need to consider which topics are too broad or too narrow and eliminate those choices.

Don’t Believe Everything You Read

Be careful when doing research online. We often accept the accuracy of what we read in books because we know that publishers and the editors who work for them would not stay in business long if they printed books full of factual errors. But people who “publish” material online don’t have the same pressure to be accurate. Practically anyone with a computer and an Internet account can publish material online. It is important that you consider the source of any material you find on the Internet. When you find a Web resource, try to find out which person or organization is publishing it, and then ask yourself if that person or organization is a respectable, trustworthy source for information on the topic you are researching.

2. Locating Primary and Secondary Sources. Once you have decided on a topic, you need to locate reliable sources of information about your topic. There are two types of sources that you should consider. **Primary sources** are records of events by people who participated in or witnessed the events. For the report on George Washington Carver, a copy of his laboratory notes would be a primary source. Personal interviews and witness accounts are also primary sources. **Secondary sources** are records of events by people who did not participate. A textbook is a secondary source, as are biographies and documentaries.

One of the most efficient ways to begin to gather information on a topic is to go to an Internet search engine and type in key words and phrases. You can find both primary and secondary sources online. For instance, simply typing in “George Washington Carver” will bring you a number of links to different websites where you can gather information about the inventor.

Using additional key words, however, will help you refine your search. If you are interested in writing about Carver’s life, entering the key words *George Washington Carver* and *biography* or *early childhood* should lead you to sites that discuss his life. However, if you are interested in one of his inventions in particular, you would be better off typing in *George Washington Carver, Cotton Hybrid* (one of his inventions). Using these key words should give you links to sites where people discuss Carver’s hybrid cotton.

The Internet should not be your only research tool. A question on the EOCT may ask you to choose the best source for a given topic. These sources may include books, journals, microfiches, documentaries, or CD-ROMs. See step 4 for more detail.

3. Paraphrasing Information. Research papers would be much easier if you were allowed to simply copy, word for word, exactly what your source material said. This is plagiarism, however, and it is illegal! Instead, you need to take the information you read and rewrite it in your own words. This process is known as paraphrasing. Questions on this aspect of the research process may ask you to select the correct way to quote material from sources.

4. Identifying and Analyzing Sources.

Questions on the EOCT will ask you to identify appropriate sources for research. You will also need to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of different sources.

What Is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is taking someone else’s words or ideas and presenting them as your own. You may use another person’s words (either the exact wording or a paraphrase) only if you cite the source (give credit to where you found the information). If you use the exact same wording as the original, you need to put these words in quotation marks.

Reference materials refer to informative, nonfiction resources like an encyclopedia, almanac, or database. For the EOCT, it will be helpful to be familiar with the purpose of these materials and how to use them. If you would like to find out more about the reference materials available in your library, ask your librarian to assist you. In addition to being knowledgeable about reference materials, it is also helpful to know the parts of a book and what each part can tell you. This information can help you quickly locate information in the book. Familiarize yourself with each part of the book and how it could help in your research efforts. You should also familiarize yourself with the formats of and information provided in other sources. A question for this standard may look like this:

Which would be the BEST place to research the migration patterns of Canada geese?

- A** a field guide to North American birds
- B** an atlas of the North American continent
- C** a journal article on seasonal Canada goose populations
- D** an interview with an expert on identifying Canada geese

Answer: **C**

Standard: *Use knowledge of research techniques to support writing.*

The best source of information about migration patterns is choice **C**, the article about seasonal goose populations. Readers would expect this source to discuss where geese live in spring and fall and could therefore expect a discussion of migration. Choice **A**, a field guide, is simply a guide to bird identification. Choice **B**, an atlas, would show maps but not migration patterns. And in choice **D**, the expert on identifying geese would not likely have as much information about migration as the journal article.

5. Documenting Your Sources. Do you know how to determine if you need to create a bibliography or a works cited list? They look similar, but a works cited list only documents the works you have specifically referenced in your paper. A bibliography contains all the works you consulted during your research. It will include all the works you cited and also any works that you did not specifically cite.

For this standard, you will need to know what information is included in a bibliographic entry and how to format that information. You may be asked a question like the one that follows.

Read this citation for a biography about Albert Einstein.

Einstein: His Life and Universe. New York:
Simon & Schuster, 2007. Print.

What error does the entry contain?

- A** The title is incorrectly punctuated.
- B** The name of the author is omitted.
- C** The lines are incorrectly indented.
- D** The date is in the wrong place.

Answer: **B**

Standard: *Use knowledge of research techniques to support writing.*

Bibliographic entries should begin with the last name of the author (or editor), so the correct answer is choice **B**. Choice A is not the correct answer because titles for books are either italicized or underlined. The second line is indented as it should be, so choice C is incorrect. Choice D is not the answer because the date is placed correctly at the end of the entry.

Read this citation for an article from the Web.

Smith, Anne. "Reading Shakespeare." *Andalusian
Literary Studies* 22.4 (2011): 432-477. *Scholars'
Research Forum*. Web.

What error does the entry contain?

- A** The title is incorrectly punctuated.
- B** The name of the author is omitted.
- C** The lines are incorrectly indented.
- D** The date of Web access is omitted.

Answer: **D**

Standard: *Use knowledge of research techniques to support writing.*

Sources from the Web include the date the article was used on the Web. Therefore, the correct answer is **D**. Choice A is not the correct answer because titles for books are either italicized or underlined. Choice B is not the correct answer because the author's name is included. The second line is indented as it should be, so choice C is incorrect.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ *Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.* ★

Effective written communication does not happen without a bit of effort. Most informational or technical pieces require hard work and revision before they can be considered excellent, or even very good. Even professional writers may struggle with their words. Drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading your writing are all essential parts of an effective writing process. Performing these tasks well is an important part of being a good writer, which is why this standard is tested on the EOCT.

The questions for this standard will focus on your ability to recognize the best revisions to poor writing to improve clarity. You will be asked to consider the best way to rewrite awkwardly worded sentences, sentences with misplaced modifiers, and other errors in sentence structure.

Questions for this standard will be based on a passage.

What is the BEST way to revise this sentence?

To meet our friends, my cousin and I went to the movies last night.

- A My cousin and I, last night, we went to the movies to meet our friends.
- B To meet our friends, last night my cousin and I went to the movies.
- C Last night, my cousin and I went to the movies to meet our friends.
- D My cousin and I, to meet our friends last night, we went to the movies.

Answer: C

Standard: *Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.*

The correct answer is choice C because it rewrites the sentence most clearly.

Steps in the Writing Process

- Step 1. Prewriting:** Gathering ideas, organizing your thoughts
- Step 2. Drafting:** Creating a rough version of the paper, often more than one
- Step 3. Revising and Editing:** Looking at your draft with a critical eye and making improvements
- Step 4. Proofreading:** Polishing your paper to make sure it is free of errors
- Step 5. Publishing:** Sharing your finished paper with others

STRATEGY BOX—Lend an Ear

If you can't determine the exact problem with a sentence, don't be afraid to trust your ear and make an educated guess. Many times you can "hear" a problem even if you can't explain exactly what is wrong.

Study Ideas for Content Domain III

To do well on the questions for this domain, you must be able to recognize effective writing and understand the importance of audience and purpose. As you look at passages for the other content domains, consider them in terms of what mode of writing they represent, the purpose the author has for writing the passage, and how you can determine the purpose from the writer's word choice and sentence structure. Basically, to practice for the writing questions on the EOCT, you should analyze the writing you see around you.

You should also go to the library and practice locating sources of information for a topic. It does not have to be a topic for any class assignment. It should be a topic in which you are interested and would like to learn more. Do not, however, limit yourself to one reference source. You will want to examine a variety of reference materials. Look them over and compare their contents. How could each be helpful to someone doing research?

If you have questions about resource materials or the research process, ask your English teacher, librarian, or media specialist to help you.

Take a Tour

One of the best ways to become a better researcher and better student is to take a guided tour of your library. Ask about a tour at the main desk. Even if you plan to do all your research at the school library, you can usually arrange for a librarian to show you around. You will learn a lot of valuable information that will save you hours of frustration later—things like how to use the library's databases and archived materials, where to find reference books, where to find magazines, and more.

Sample Questions for Content Domain III

This section has some sample questions for you to answer. After you have answered each question, the correct answer will be provided, along with an explanation as to why the other answer choices are incorrect.

Read this passage and answer the questions that follow.

Recreating the World

Plot provides the sequence to a story, and theme tells us about the author’s insight into the human condition, but it is imagery that makes an imaginary world real to readers. Writers use words and phrases that evoke images to recreate a sense of what it feels like to be alive and present in a given situation. For example, a line such as “the cat’s eyes gleam in the moonlight” will most likely bring an image to the reader’s mind. When discussing the literary technique of imagery, most people think of visual imagery, but a good writer employs any kind of imagery that appeals to our five senses. Any novel, poem, or short story is just sunk without imagery.

Auditory images suggest sounds to readers as “heard” in the phrases, the soft cooing of a dove, or the blare of a car’s horn. Gustatory imagery relates to taste. If a character in a story is enjoying a meal, the writer might describe the flavor and texture of sweet corn with butter melting over it. The writer might employ olfactory imagery, the imagery of smell, and tell of the scent of the freshly cooked corn with the steam and melting butter blending together. By using imagery, writers attempt to draw their readers into the stories, so that readers can mentally share what the characters in the stories experience. Ideally, if a character in a novel is hungry, the reader should be too.

1 Which statement BEST represents the thesis for this passage?

- A The most effective imagery appeals to all five senses.
- B Olfactory imagery appeals to our sense of taste.
- C A good writer must make her readers feel hungry.
- D Most writers use visual imagery to convey their central idea.

Answer: **A**

Standard: *Demonstrate knowledge of coherent and accurate informational and technical writing.*

A thesis is the central idea. Choice B presents incorrect information. Choices C and D relate to specific items mentioned in the passage but do not reflect the entire scope of the passage. The only choice that summarizes the entire passage is choice A.

2 Read this sentence from paragraph 2.

The writer might employ olfactory imagery, the imagery of smell, and tell of the scent of the freshly cooked corn with the steam and melting butter blending together.

What is the MOST precise way to write this sentence?

- A The writer might employ olfactory imagery—the imagery of smell—and tell of the scent of the freshly cooked corn with the steam and melting butter blending together.
- B Employing olfactory imagery—the imagery of smell—the writer might describe the scent of the freshly cooked corn, the steam, and the melting butter blending together.
- C Because the writer might employ olfactory imagery, the imagery of smell, and tell of the scent of the freshly cooked corn with the steam and melting butter blending together.
- D Leave as is.

Answer: **B**

Standard: *Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.*

This is a long sentence, and although the sense of it can be ascertained as written, the writing is somewhat confusing and could be structured better. This eliminates choice D. Choice C starts with the word *Because*, making the whole string of words a dependent clause. Dependent clauses cannot stand alone, so choice C is incorrect. This leaves choices A and B. There are three different scents being discussed, and choice **B** does a better job of placing these in a series by listing them as *the scent of the freshly cooked corn, the steam, and the melting butter*.

3 Which sentence conveys a tone that is inconsistent with the rest of the passage?

- A “Writers use words and phrases that evoke images to recreate a sense of what it feels like to be alive and present in a given situation.”
- B “For example, a line such as “the cat’s eyes gleam in the moonlight” will most likely bring an image to the reader’s mind.”
- C “Any novel, poem, or short story is just sunk without imagery.”
- D “Ideally, if a character in a novel is hungry, the reader should be, too.”

Answer: **C**

Standard: *Organize a clear and coherent writing sample.*

Since this passage is written for an academic audience, the language should be more formal than informal. Choice **C** uses the informal phrase *just sunk* when a more formal phrase like *hurt* or *deeply compromised* should be used. In contrast, choices A, B, and D all use formal language appropriate for the audience.

4 Read this sentence from paragraph 2.

If a character in a story is enjoying a meal, the writer might describe the flavor and texture of sweet corn with butter melting over it.

Which transition should be placed at the beginning of the sentence?

- A As a result,
- B For example,
- C Later,
- D Now,

Answer: **B**

Standard: *Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.*

Although the question asks what word should be placed at the beginning of the sentence, the key to answering this question lies in the previous sentence. Determining the meaning of the previous sentence will help you pick the correct word with which to begin this sentence. The previous sentence mentions *gustatory images*, and this sentence then follows with an example of a gustatory image. This makes choice **B**, *For example*, the best answer. It is the only answer choice that creates a logical link between the ideas in both sentences.

5 Which article would MOST likely support the central idea of this passage?

- A** “How the Senses Connect Readers to a Story”
- B** “Why Good Writers Must Have Sharp Senses”
- C** “Using Visual Imagery to Help Reader Imagine Scenes”
- D** “Ways to Use Imagery to Slow Down the Pace of a Story”

Answer: **A**

Standard: *Use knowledge of research techniques to support writing.*

Choice B refers to writers’ own senses, not how the senses are used in writing. Choices C and D both refer to imagery, but present content different than that of the passage’s central idea. The only choice that supports the central idea of the passage—that imagery draws readers into a story—is choice **A**.

Content Domain IV: Language

A LOOK AT CONTENT DOMAIN IV



Test questions in this domain will measure your ability to recognize and apply Standard American English, including grammar, punctuation, and sentence construction, and to understand different writing formats. Your answers to these questions will help show how well you can perform on the following standards:

- Demonstrate understanding of Standard English grammar and usage.
- Use parallel structure.
- Use phrases and clauses to convey meaning and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.
- Apply conventions of Standard American English spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.
- Use a semicolon to link two or more closely related independent clauses.

Content Domain IV focuses on your ability to recognize and use Standard American English correctly. Questions for this content domain will ask you to revise text in order to clarify meaning, add variety and interest. Questions will also ask you to revise structure based on grammar and usage. Other questions will require you to correct errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

NOTE: Students taking the EOCT are expected to be able to apply Standard American English usage and grammar, as well as the conventions of spelling, capitalization, and punctuation that have been taught throughout their school years, not just those introduced in grade 9.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ *Demonstrate understanding of Standard English grammar and usage.* ★

To test your knowledge of Standard English, you will be asked to identify and correct the grammatical errors in a sentence or part of a passage. The list below identifies some of the topics you may see on the EOCT.

- Subject-verb agreement
- Sentence structure (inappropriate fragments and run-ons)
- Verbs (correct tense, shifts in verb tense, inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood, and use of irregular verbs)
- Precise word choice
- Homonyms
- Double-negatives/comparisons
- Pronouns and pronoun-antecedent agreement (including inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person and vague pronouns; i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents)
- Commonly confused words/misused words
- Placement of modifiers (phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers)
- Parallel structure
- Use of phrases and clauses to convey meaning and add variety and interest to writing or presentations

In addition, there are terms related to grammar and usage with which you should be familiar. Here is a list:

Phrases

noun phrase
verb phrase
adjectival phrase
adverbial phrase
participial phrase
prepositional phrase
absolute phrase

Clauses

independent clause
dependent clause
noun clause
relative clause
adverbial clause

If any of these terms are unfamiliar to you, please talk with your teacher or look them up in a grammar handbook. Each of these topics has a number of subtopics and rules associated with it, so it is important that you use resource materials that will give you this information.

All questions for this domain will be based on passages or sentences that contain some errors. Questions may look like this:

What is the correct way to write this sentence?

Teresa studies for an hour, outlined her paper, and then taking a break.

- A Teresa studied for an hour, outlined her paper, and then had taking a break.
- B Teresa studied for an hour, outlined her paper, and then takes a break.
- C Teresa studied for an hour, outlined her paper, and then took a break.
- D Teresa studied for an hour, outlined her paper, and then will take a break.

Answer: C

Standard: *Recognize and correct inappropriate shift in verb tense.*

For this question, think about how often you hear people say, “then had taking.” If it sounds odd to you, it is because there is no such verb tense. This means that choice A is an incorrect answer. Choices B and D are not correct answers either, because the verb tense shifts in the sentences. You may not notice this specifically, but you probably sensed there was something strange about saying Teresa “studied” and then “takes” or “will take” a break. Contrast this with choice C, which uses the same verb tense throughout and is therefore the correct answer.

This question also tests **parallelism**, which states that objects linked together have to be similar in tense and number. In this case, the verbs *studied*, *outlined*, and *taking* are a series of actions joined together by the conjunction *and*. However, the sentence in the question is incorrect because the verbs—*studied*, *outlined*, and *taking*—are not in the

same tense. Changing *taking* to *took* corrects this problem because now all the verbs—*studied*, *outlined*, and *took*—are in the past tense.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ *Use parallel structure.* ★

In mathematics, parallel lines go in the same direction and do not intersect. In language, parallel structure means that sentence elements—verbs, adjectives, various types of phrase—work together without conflicting. Parallel elements make it easier for your reader to understand what you are saying. They can also add emphasis to your overall central idea. Consider the following two sentences.

He liked playing soccer, training his dog, and to photograph animals.
He liked playing soccer, training his dog, and photographing animals.

Both sentences list three activities. However, the second sentence expresses each activity using parallel structure. Parallel structure reinforces the idea that the three subjects belong together.

President Abraham Lincoln knew how to use parallel structure for emphasis when he said, “. . . —and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.” The three parallel elements of government build throughout the series. Questions related to this standard may look like the following:

1 Which sentence displays correct parallel structure?

- A Growing the tomatoes required digging, weeding, and water.
- B He told us which route to take and the route that should be avoided at all costs.
- C The coach smiled at her, invited her to join the drill, and then she blew the whistle.
- D High-tech sports fabrics wick moisture away, are color fast, and require no ironing.

Answer: **D**

Standard: *Use parallel structure.*

Choice **D** is the correct answer because the three elements are all parallel verb phrases, all expressed in the present tense. To correct choice A, change water to watering. Choice B becomes much clearer when the second part mirrors the first—which route to avoid. Choice C begins with parallel predicates, followed by a whole new independent clause.

2 Which is the BEST way to conclude this sentence?

He wrote thank you notes to his family, relatives, and _____.

- A** people who had become friends,
- B** those who were friendly to him.
- C** friendly folks.
- D** friends.

Answer: **D**

Standard: *Use parallel structure.*

Very often the correct version is also the simplest. In this case, **D** is more direct, and makes the point far better than the other options, so choice D is the correct answer.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Use phrases and clauses to convey meaning and add variety and interest to writing or presentations. ★

You are most likely familiar with the eight parts of speech. Generally, they are single words that perform a single function in a sentence—naming, showing action, describing, or demonstrating relationships. Sometimes groups of words combine to perform the action of a noun, adjective, or adverb.

Softball is exciting.

Playing softball is exciting.

To play softball is exciting.

In the latter two sentences “softball” is replaced by a two and a three word phrase. In each case, however, the phrase functions as the noun; it is the subject of the sentence.

Read the following question.

In which sentence is the phrase “on the porch” used as an adjective?

- A On the porch is my favorite place to be.
- B The children played on the porch.
- C The dog on the porch scared me.
- D I waited for him on the porch.

Answer: C

Standard: *Use phrases and clauses to convey meaning and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.*

In choice C, the phrase modifies the word dog, making it an adjective. The phrase is adverbial in use in answer choices B and D because it modifies the verb in each. In choice A, the phrase is the subject of the sentence, functioning as a noun.

Command of phrases is a matter of knowing how they function and then ensuring that they function properly.

Another sentence element is the clause. A clause has a subject and verb, but lacks the complete thought that makes a sentence a sentence. Clauses are referred to as “dependent” or “subordinate.” For comparison purposes, a sentence is sometimes referred to as an “independent clause.” A dependent clause that is capitalized and punctuated as though it were a sentence is called a fragment, and it is a serious sentence error.

Sentence: I went home from school.

Clause: After I went home from school . . .

Clause: Because I went home from school . . .

Clause: . . . even though I went home from school.

Note that just because a phrase lacks something a sentence has—a complete thought—the phrase might still be longer.

Clauses, too, function as nouns, adjective, and adverbs.

In which sentence is the underlined group of words a dependent clause?

- A The used car still ran well because its owner maintained it carefully.
- B Because the used car still ran well, the price was rather high.
- C The used car still ran well, but the paint was fading badly.
- D A used car still running well is a rarity.

Answer: **B**

Standard: *Use phrases and clauses to convey meaning and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.*



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Apply conventions of Standard American English spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. ★

You have been attending to spelling, capitalization, and punctuation for about as long as you have been reading and writing and you will continue to do so. These are skills that find more and more ways to become complex.

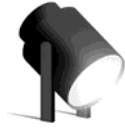
Spelling is a skill you can help yourself with. No matter how many words you misspell, you are probably only violating a small number of rules. Keep a list of the words you miss, and look for patterns. Are you having problems with suffixes [word endings], or figuring out when to use *ei* or *ie*, or when to double consonants? Set one goal at a time, and you will make progress.

Capital letters signal something special about a word. They mean that the word is a formal title. Capitals are used when referring to the name of a person or place, a holiday, a nation or nationality, a formal event, or a book or movie title. We begin sentences and direct quotations with capitals.

Punctuation exists only in written language, and it tells the reader how to group the information in a sentence. Commas group words into thoughts. Semicolons and end punctuation [periods, question marks, and exclamation marks] become complete thoughts. Quotation marks add a precision and a source to thoughts.

You can see the information carried in spelling and capitalization in the sentences below.

- holly wrote doctor mills has a mild case of the flu she caught it most likely last week.
- “Holly,” wrote Doctor Mills, “has a mild case of the flu. She caught it most likely last week.”



Spotlight on the Standards

★ *Use a semicolon to link two or more closely related independent clauses.* ★

A punctuation mark that you may not have used in earlier grades is introduced in grade 9; this mark is the semicolon [;]. This little symbol may seem intimidating, but once you know how to use it you may find that it comes in handy. Looking at the symbol itself, you can see that it looks like a period centered over a comma. One way to think of the semicolon is as a combination of these two other punctuation marks. You can use it when you need something stronger than a comma but not as strong as a period.

So how does it work? When you have two ideas, each expressed as an **independent clause** (a group of words that can stand alone as a sentence), you need to separate those clauses in some way. One way is to use a period and create two separate sentences, as in the following example:

Example 1. I am not ready. I will be ready soon.

The example above follows the rules of grammar and punctuation, but it sounds choppy. Since the second sentence follows up on an idea introduced in the first, different punctuation could be used to show the connected ideas. One choice is to use a comma followed by a conjunction:

Example 2. I am not ready, but I will be ready soon.

Another choice is to use just a semicolon:

Example 3. I am not ready; I will be ready soon.

The semicolon in example 3 is a stronger punctuation mark than the comma. It creates more of a separation between the two ideas, but not as much separation as the period in example 1 creates.

When you combine two closely related independent clauses with a semicolon, the result is called a **compound sentence**. Here is another example:

Independent clauses: I am left-handed. My brother is right-handed.

Compound sentence: I am left-handed; my brother is right-handed.

Sentence combining adds variety and interest to your writing, but you must be careful. To use anything weaker than a semicolon—a comma, a dash, or nothing—is a serious sentence error.

Compound sentence: I am left-handed; my brother is right-handed.

Comma splice: I am left-handed, my brother is right-handed.

Run-on sentence: I am left-handed my brother is right-handed.

Study Ideas for Content Domain IV

To study for this domain, you may want to concentrate on the kinds of errors you typically make in your own writing. (Your teacher may be able to help you with this.) If you know what these errors are, look them up in your grammar book and study the samples. Or, you may want to work through a grammar workbook that will allow you to practice in the areas that need improvement. If you are not sure of your weak areas, you may want to take a look at samples of each topic in your grammar book. If any topics are not clear to you, work through some practice items in a grammar workbook for those topics.

Parallel structure is one of those places where the four ELA skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—come together. Go to the library or online, and find famous speeches, such as Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, quoted earlier. Good speech writers use parallel structure because it adds clarity and emphasis. Moreover, it is easy on the ear.

Be alert, in your own writing, when a sentence lists ideas, thoughts, or activities. Check to see that you have used parallel structure. Try experimenting with the various structures you may use: “fishing” [noun] or “to fish” [infinitive phrase]. Let your ear in on the fun; read the sentence out loud to see if one way sounds better than the other.

Sample Questions for Content Domain IV

This section has some sample questions for you to answer. After each question, the correct answer is given along with an explanation for why the other answer choices are incorrect.

Read this rough draft of a report and answer the questions that follow.

Margaret Knight, Inventor Extraordinaire

Most Americans have heard of Alexander Graham Bell. He invented the telephone in 1876. Most Americans, however, has not heard of Margaret Knight. An inventor working in the same time period, Knight created something many people also still use every day—the paper bag.

Margaret Knight, born in 1838, is an inventor from an early age. When she was twelve years old, she is said to have created a stop mechanism for textile looms. If someone got hurt while operating a loom, her invention shut down the machinery.

Knight's most influential invention was an attachment to a paper bag machine that created a square bottom on the bag. Before her invention, paper bags were shaped like envelopes and could not stand up. Knight later invented a dress and skirt shield, a spit, and have making several inventions for the manufacture of shoes.

With a total of twenty-six patents, Margaret Knight was one of the most prolific inventors in American history. She died, however, with little money and little reknown. Next time you are shopping at a grocery store and ask for a paper bag, you will be giving a shout-out to an overlooked woman.

1 Which shows the correct way to make a compound sentence from the first two sentences of the article?

- A Most Americans have heard of Alexander Graham Bell he invented the telephone in 1876.
- B Most Americans have heard of Alexander Graham Bell—He invented the telephone in 1876.
- C Most Americans have heard of Alexander Graham Bell; he invented the telephone in 1876.
- D Most Americans have heard of Alexander Graham Bell, he invented the telephone in 1876.

Answer: C

Standard: *Use a semicolon to link two or more closely related independent clauses.*

Choice **C** is the correct answer, because it is the only sentence that uses a semicolon between the two independent clauses.

2 Read this sentence from paragraph 2.

Knight later invented a dress and skirt shield, a spit, and have making several inventions for the manufacture of shoes.

Which is the correct way to write the phrase “and have making several inventions” as used in the sentence?

- A** and have made several inventions
- B** and several inventions
- C** making several inventions
- D** Leave as is.

Answer: **B**

Standard: *Use parallel structure.*

“Several inventions for the manufacture of shoes” is another item in a list of nouns in the sentence. It should be joined to the other items in the list by *and*, which makes choice **B** the correct answer. If you read aloud “and have making,” you know that it doesn’t sound right. Choices **A** and **C** attempt to correct a verb problem, but the real problem is parallelism.

3 Which sentence contains an error in verb usage?

- A** “Most Americans, however, has not heard of Margaret Knight.”
- B** “An inventor working in the same time period, Knight created something many people also still use every day—the paper bag.”
- C** “When she was twelve years old, she is said to have created a stop mechanism for textile looms.”
- D** “Before her invention, paper bags were shaped like envelopes and could not stand up.”

Answer: **A**

Standard: *Demonstrate understanding of Standard American English.*

The correct answer is choice **A**. The verb “has” requires a singular subject, and the subject here, “Americans,” is plural. In choice **C**, the tense is correct because “she is said” refers to a claim still made today. Options **B** and **D** are correct as written.

Appendix A

EOCT Sample Overall Study Plan Sheet

Here is a sample of what an OVERALL study plan may look like. You can use the Blank Overall Study Sheet in Appendix B or create your own.

Materials/Resources I May Need When I Study:

(You can look back at page 6 for ideas.)

1. *This study guide*
2. *Pens*
3. *Highlighter*
4. *Notebook*
5. *Dictionary*
6. *English textbook*

Possible Study Locations:

- First Choice: *The library*
- Second Choice: *My room*
- Third Choice: *My mom's office*

Overall Study Goals:

1. *Read and work through the entire study guide*
2. *Answer the sample questions and study the answers*
3. *Do additional reading in an English textbook*

Number of Weeks I Will Study: *6 weeks*

Number of Days a Week I Will Study: *5 days a week*

Best Study Times for Me:

- Weekdays: *7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.*
- Saturday: *9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.*
- Sunday: *2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.*

Appendix B

Blank Overall Study Plan Sheet

Materials/Resources I May Need When I Study:
(You can look back at page 6 for ideas.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Possible Study Locations:

- First Choice: _____
- Second Choice: _____
- Third Choice: _____

Overall Study Goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Number of Weeks I Will Study: _____

Number of Days a Week I Will Study: _____

Best Study Times for Me: _____

- Weekdays: _____
- Saturday: _____
- Sunday: _____

Appendix C

EOCT Sample Daily Study Plan Sheet

Here is a sample of what a DAILY study plan may look like. You can use the Blank Daily Study Plan Sheet in Appendix D or create your own.

Materials I May Need Today:

1. *Study Guide*
2. *Pen*
3. *Notebook*

Today's Study Location: *The desk in my room*

Study Time Today: *From 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. with a short break at 7:30 p.m.*

(Be sure to consider how long you can actively study in one sitting. Can you sit for 20 minutes? 30 minutes? An hour? If you say you will study for three hours, but get restless after 40 minutes, anything beyond 40 minutes may not be productive—you will most likely fidget and daydream your time away. “Doing time” at your desk doesn’t count for real studying.)

If I start to get tired or lose focus today, I will *do some sit-ups.*

Today's Study Goals and Accomplishments: (Be specific. Include things like number of pages, sections, or standards. The more specific you are, the better able you will be to tell if you reached your goals. Keep it REALISTIC. You will retain more if you study small “chunks” or blocks of material at a time.)

<i>Study Task</i>	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Needs more work</i>	<i>Needs more information</i>
<i>1. Review what I learned last time</i>	X		
<i>2. Study the first standard in Content Domain I</i>	X		
<i>3. Study the second standard in Content Domain I</i>		X	

What I learned today:

1. *The different structures of fiction writing*
2. *How to distinguish between fact and opinion*
3. *The definition of common modes of rhetoric*

Today's reward for meeting my study goals: *Eating some popcorn*

Appendix D Blank Daily Study Plan Sheet

Materials I May Need Today:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Today’s Study Location: _____

Study Time Today: _____

(Be sure to consider how long you can actively study in one sitting. Can you sit for 20 minutes? 30 minutes? An hour? If you say you will study for three hours, but get restless after 40 minutes, anything beyond 40 minutes may not be productive—you will most likely fidget and daydream your time away. “Doing time” at your desk doesn’t count for real studying.)

If I start to get tired or lose focus today, I will _____

Today’s Study Goals and Accomplishments: (Be specific. Include things like number of pages, sections, or standards. The more specific you are, the better able you will be to tell if you reached your goals. Keep it REALISTIC. You will retain more if you study small “chunks” or blocks of material at a time.)

<i>Study Task</i>	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Needs more work</i>	<i>Needs more information</i>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

What I learned today:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Today’s reward for meeting my study goals: _____