PLAN®

CONNECTING COLLEGE READINESS STANDARDS™ TO THE CLASSROOM
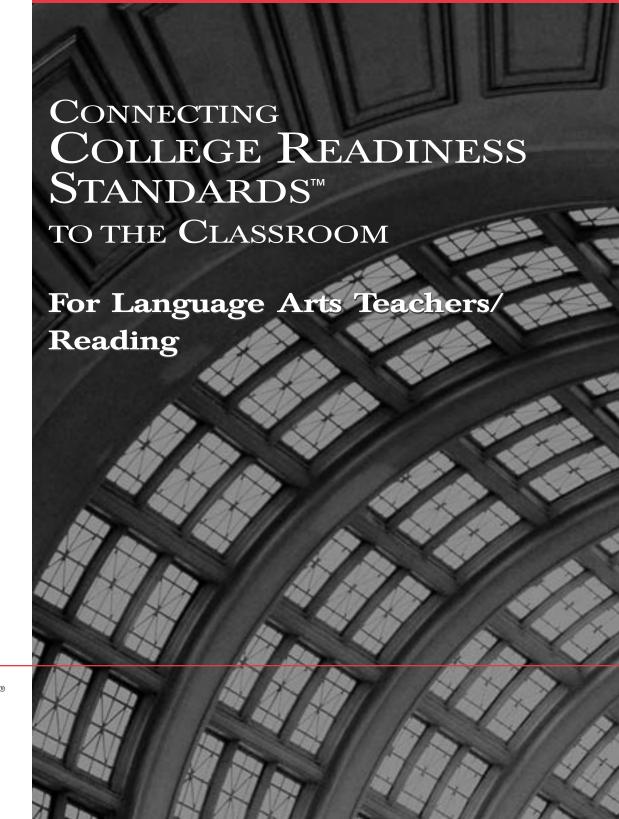
For Language Arts Teachers/ Reading

ACT®

ACT endorses the *Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education* and the *Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement*, guides to the conduct of those involved in educational testing. ACT is committed to ensuring that each of its testing programs upholds the guidelines in each *Code*.

A copy of each *Code* may be obtained free of charge from ACT Customer Services (68), P.O. Box 1008, Iowa City, IA 52243-1008, 319/337-1429.

Visit ACT's website at: **www.act.org**

13343

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

INTRODUCTION

ACT has developed this guide to help classroom teachers, curriculum coordinators, and counselors interpret the College Readiness Standards Report data for PLAN® Reading. The guide includes:

■ A description of the **College Readiness Standards**™ and **Benchmarks** for PLAN

■ A description of the **PLAN Reading Test**

■ A set of **sample test questions**

■ A description of the **Assessment-Instruction Link**

■ A set of classroom **instructional activities**

The College Readiness Standards for PLAN are statements that describe what students who score in the five score ranges 13–15, 16–19, 20–23, 24–27 and 28–32 are *likely* to know and to be able to do. The statements are generalizations based on the performance of many students scoring in these five score ranges. College Readiness Standards have not been developed for students whose scores fall in the 1–12 range because these students, as a group, do not demonstrate skills similar to each other consistently enough to permit useful generalizations.

The College Readiness Standards for PLAN are accompanied by ideas for progress that help teachers identify ways of enhancing student learning based on the scores students receive.

The College Readiness Standards Report for PLAN provides the percentage of your students in each College Readiness Standards score range in each of the four content areas the PLAN test measures—English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science. The report provides data that compare the performance of your students (Local) with all students in a nationally representative comparison group (norm group).

PLAN is a curriculum-based assessment program developed by ACT to help tenth graders plan their academic careers and prepare for entry into college or the world of work. As part of ACT's Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS®), PLAN is complemented by EXPLORE®, ACT's eighth- and ninth-grade program, and by the ACT®, for eleventh and twelfth graders. We hope this guide helps you assist your students as they plan and pursue their future studies.

> **"The role of standardized testing is to let parents, students, and institutions know what students are ready to learn next."**
>
> — Ralph Tyler, October 1991
> Chairman Emeritus of
> ACT's Board of Trustees

THE COLLEGE READINESS STANDARDS REPORT FOR PLAN READING

The College Readiness Standards Report data for PLAN Reading allow you to compare the performance of students in your school with the performance of students nationwide. The report provides summary information you can use to map the development of your students' knowledge and skills in reading. Used along with your own classroom observations and with other resources, the test results can help you to analyze your students' progress in reading and to identify areas of strength and areas that need more attention to ensure your students are on track to be college ready by the time they graduate from high school. You can then use the Standards as one source of information in the instructional planning process.

A sample report appears on the next page. An explanation of its features is provided below.

COLLEGE READINESS STANDARDS RANGES

Down the sides of the report, in shaded boxes, are the six score ranges reported for the College Readiness Standards for PLAN. To determine the number of score ranges and the width of each score range, ACT staff reviewed normative data, college admission criteria, and information obtained through ACT's Course Placement Service. For a more detailed explanation of the way the score ranges were determined, see page 5. For a table listing the College Readiness Standards by score range for Reading, see page 8. For a discussion of College Readiness Benchmark Scores, see page 28.

LOCAL AND NATIONAL STUDENT RESULTS

In the center of the report, the percent of students who scored in a particular score range at an individual school (Local) is compared with the percent of all tenth-grade students in the norm group (National) who scored in the same range. The percent of students for the norm group is based on the most current set of nationally representative norms.

THE COLLEGE READINESS STANDARDS

The College Readiness Standards were developed by identifying the knowledge and skills students need in order to respond successfully to questions on the PLAN Reading Test. The Standards are cumulative, which means that if students score, for example, in the 20–23 score range, they are likely to be able to demonstrate most or all of the knowledge and skills in the 13–15, 16–19, and 20–23 score ranges. Students may be able to demonstrate some of the skills in the next score range, 24–27, but not consistently enough as a group to reach that score range. A description of the way the College Readiness Standards were developed can be found on pages 5–6. A table listing the College Readiness Standards for Reading can be found on page 8.

2009-2010 PLAN Profile Summary Report
School Report -
Custom Report
Custom Description
National Norm Group: Fall 10th

Page: 4
Code: 999999
HIGH SCHOOL Name
CITY, ST
Total Students In Report: 113

TABLE 1c: Are our students *On Track* to be college ready when they graduate from high school?

College Readiness Standards Report
(Percent of students in College Readiness Standards score ranges)

CRS Range	English (Benchmark =15)	Mathematics (Benchmark =19)	Reading (Benchmark = 17)	Science (Benchmark = 21)	CRS Range
1-12	15 17	5 7	12 15	3 4	1-12
13-15	18 21	23 25	25 27	15 17	13-15
16-19	42 36	44 40	28 25	43 44	16-19
20-23	17 19	18 15	20 21	27 27	20-23
24-27	6 6	8 7	10 9	8 6	24-27
28-32	2 1	2 5	5 2	3 2	28-32
% At or Above Benchmark	72 69	36 35	56 51	25 25	% At or Above Benchmark

☐ = Local   ■ = National

Notes: *Connecting College Readiness Standards to the Classroom* interpretive guides to use with this report can be found at www.act.org/standard/guides/plan. The College Readiness Standards can be found starting on page 8 of each content guide.

Local report group percentages can be compared with national reference group percentages, which are based on of all 10th-grade students in the norm group. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

The score ranges given in this report are linked to the College Readiness Standards, which describe what students who score in various score ranges are likely to know and to be able to do, and reflect the progression and complexity of skills in each test of the PLAN program. College Readiness Benchmark Scores have been developed for PLAN to indicate a student's probable readiness for entry-level college coursework by the time the student graduates from high school. The data from this report, along with the College Readiness Standards and Benchmarks and information from other sources, can be used to inform local instructional priorities.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLEGE READINESS STANDARDS

WHAT ARE THE COLLEGE READINESS STANDARDS?

The College Readiness Standards communicate educational expectations. Each Standard describes what students who score in the designated range are *likely* to be able to do with what they know. Students can typically demonstrate the skills and knowledge within the score ranges preceding the range in which they scored, so the College Readiness Standards are cumulative.

In helping students make the transition from high school to postsecondary education or to the world of work, teachers, counselors, and parents can use the College Readiness Standards for PLAN to interpret students' scores and to understand which skills students need to develop to be better prepared for the future.

HOW WERE THE SCORE RANGES DETERMINED?

To determine the number of score ranges and the width of each score range for PLAN, ACT staff reviewed PLAN normative data and considered the relationship among EXPLORE, PLAN, and the ACT.

In reviewing the PLAN normative data, ACT staff analyzed the distribution of student scores across the score scale. Because PLAN and the ACT have a common score scale, ACT can provide PLAN examinees with an estimated ACT Composite score. When the score ranges were being determined, therefore, both the PLAN score scale, 1–32, and the ACT score scale, 1–36, were reviewed side by side. And because many students take PLAN to determine how well they might perform on the ACT, the course-placement research that ACT has conducted over the last forty years was also reviewed. ACT's Course

Placement Service provides colleges and universities with cutoff scores that are used to place students into appropriate entry-level courses in college; and these cutoff scores were used to help define the score ranges.

After analyzing all the data and reviewing different possible score ranges, ACT staff concluded that using the six score ranges 1–12, 13–15, 16–19, 20–23, 24–27, and 28–32 would best distinguish students' levels of achievement so as to assist teachers, administrators, and others in relating PLAN test scores to students' attainment of specific skills and understandings.

HOW WERE THE COLLEGE READINESS STANDARDS DEVELOPED?

After reviewing normative data, college admission criteria, and information obtained through ACT's Course Placement Service, content experts wrote the College Readiness Standards based on their analysis of the skills and knowledge students need in order to successfully respond to the test questions in each score range. Experts analyzed numerous test questions that had been answered correctly by 80%

> "The examination should describe the student in meaningful terms—meaningful to the student, the parent, and the elementary and high school teacher—meaningful in the sense that the profile scores correspond to recognizable school activities, and directly suggest appropriate distributions of emphasis in learning and teaching."
>
> — E. F. Lindquist, February 1958
> Cofounder of ACT

or more of the examinees within each score range. The 80% criterion was chosen because it offers those who use the College Readiness Standards a high degree of confidence that students scoring in a given score range will most *likely* be able to demonstrate the skills and knowledge described in that range.

As a content validity check, ACT invited nationally recognized scholars from high school and university English, Reading, and Education departments to review the College Readiness Standards for the PLAN Reading Test. These teachers and researchers provided ACT with independent, authoritative reviews of the ways the College Readiness Standards reflect the skills and knowledge students need to successfully respond to the questions on the PLAN Reading Test.

Because PLAN is curriculum based, ACT and independent consultants conduct a review every three to four years to ensure that the knowledge and skills described in the Standards and outlined in the test specifications continue to reflect those being taught in classrooms nationwide.

HOW SHOULD THE COLLEGE READINESS STANDARDS BE INTERPRETED AND USED?

The College Readiness Standards reflect the progression and complexity of the skills measured in PLAN. Because no PLAN test form measures all of the skills and knowledge included in the College Readiness Standards, the Standards must be interpreted as skills and knowledge that *most* students who score in a particular score range are *likely* to be able to demonstrate. Since there were relatively few test questions that were answered correctly by 80% or more of the students who scored in the lower score ranges, the Standards in these ranges should be interpreted cautiously. The skills and understandings of students who score in the 1–12 score range may still be evolving. For these students the skills and understandings in the higher score ranges could become their target achievement outcomes.

It is important to recognize that PLAN does not measure everything students have learned nor does any test measure everything necessary for students to know to be successful in college or in the world of work. The PLAN Reading Test includes questions from a large domain of skills and from areas of knowledge that have been judged important for success in college and beyond. Thus, the College Readiness Standards should be interpreted in a responsible way that will help students understand what they need to know and do if they are going to make a successful transition to college, vocational school, or the world of work. As students choose courses they plan to take in high school, they can use the Standards to identify the skills and knowledge they need to develop to be better prepared for their future. Teachers and curriculum coordinators can use the Standards to learn more about their students' academic strengths and weaknesses and can then modify their instruction and guide students accordingly.

HOW ARE THE COLLEGE READINESS STANDARDS ORGANIZED?

As content experts reviewed the test questions connected to each score range, distinct yet overlapping areas of knowledge and skill were identified. For example, there are many types of questions in which students are asked to identify the main idea of a paragraph or passage. Therefore, *Main Ideas and Author's Approach* is one area, or *strand,* within the College Readiness Standards for PLAN Reading. The other strands are *Supporting Details; Sequential, Comparative, and Cause-Effect Relationships; Meanings of Words;* and *Generalizations and Conclusions.*

The strands provide an organizational framework for the College Readiness Standards statements. As you review the Standards, you will note a progression in complexity within each strand. For example, in the 13–15 range for the Main Ideas and Author's Approach strand, students are able to "recognize a clear intent of an author or narrator in uncomplicated literary narratives," while in the 28–32 range, students demonstrate that they are able to "infer the main idea or purpose of more challenging passages or their paragraphs."

WHAT ARE THE "DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PLAN READING PASSAGES"?

A guiding principle underlying the development of the College Readiness Standards was that reading well depends on a range of flexible, adaptable strategies and that good readers work actively to construct meaning. As students progress in their learning, they encounter different types of discourse and read texts that vary in complexity. Effective readers adjust their reading to fit the type of text and employ specific tactics when they encounter sophisticated text.

Because the complexity of a passage on the PLAN Reading Test plays such a key role in students' ability to successfully negotiate the passage (and the test questions), the College Readiness Standards for PLAN Reading also include Descriptions of the PLAN Reading Passages. These descriptions clarify what kinds of passages are referred to in the College Readiness Standards as *Uncomplicated, More Challenging,* or *Complex Literary Narratives* and *Uncomplicated, More Challenging,* or *Complex Informational Passages.*

The Standards are complemented by brief descriptions of learning experiences from which high school students might benefit. Based on the College Readiness Standards, these ideas for progress are designed to provide classroom teachers with help for lesson plan development. These ideas, which are given in Table 1, demonstrate one way that information learned from standardized test results can be used to inform classroom instruction.

Because students learn over time and in various contexts, it is important to use a variety of instructional methods and materials to meet students' diverse needs and to help strengthen and build upon their knowledge and skills. The ideas for progress offer teachers a variety of suggestions to foster learning experiences from which students would likely benefit as they move from one level of learning to the next.

Because learning is a complex and individual process, it is especially important to use multiple sources of information—classroom observations and teacher-developed assessment tools, as well as standardized tests—to accurately reflect what each student knows and can do. The Standards and the

ideas for progress, used in conjunction with classroom-based and curricular resources, help teachers and administrators to guide the whole education of every student.

WHAT ARE THE PLAN READING TEST COLLEGE READINESS STANDARDS?

Table 1 on pages 8–13 suggests links between what students are *likely* to be able to do (the College Readiness Standards) and what learning experiences students would likely benefit from.

The College Readiness Standards are organized both by score range (along the left-hand side) and by strand (across the top).

The ideas for progress are also arranged by score range and by strand. Although many of the ideas cross more than one strand, a primary strand has been identified for each in order to facilitate their use in the classroom. For example, the statement in the 20–23 range "distinguish between key concepts and subordinate ideas in a text and write a concise summary" brings together concepts from several strands, such as Main Ideas and Author's Approach; Supporting Details; and Generalizations and Conclusions. However, this idea is primarily linked to the Main Ideas and Author's Approach strand.

As you review the table, you will note that ideas for progress have been provided for the 28–32 score range, the highest score range for PLAN. PLAN is designed to measure knowledge and skills achieved through the tenth grade. Ideas for progress for the 28–32 score range are shown to suggest educational experiences from which students may benefit before they take the ACT and enter college.

Table 1:   The College Readiness Standards

The Standards describe what students who score in the specified score ranges are *likely* to know and to be able to do. The ideas for progress help teachers identify ways of enhancing students' learning based on the scores students receive. The score range at the Benchmark level of achievement is highlighted.

		Main Ideas and Author's Approach	*Supporting Details*
1–12	**Standards**	■ Students who score in the 1–12 range are most likely beginning to develop the knowledge and skills assessed in the other score ranges.	
	ideas for progress	■ locate details in a literary text that suggest the author's or narrator's intent ■ speculate about an author's or narrator's beliefs, motives, or thinking	■ write, exchange, and answer a series of questions that examine significant details presented in a text ■ locate and discuss details presented in a text (e.g., who, what, where)
13–15	**Standards**	■ Recognize a clear intent of an author or narrator in uncomplicated literary narratives	■ Locate basic facts (e.g., names, dates, events) clearly stated in a passage
	ideas for progress	■ work with peers to create logical statements about the main idea or purpose of simple paragraphs	■ determine which details in a text are essential to understanding the author's or narrator's intended message ■ scan a text in order to locate specific details (e.g., dates, specialized terms, facts) ■ identify the author's or narrator's reasons for including specific information in the text

Descriptions of the PLAN Reading Passages

Uncomplicated Literary Narratives refers to excerpts from essays, short stories, and novels that tend to use simple language and structure, have a clear purpose and a familiar style, present straightforward interactions between characters, and employ only a limited number of literary devices such as metaphor, simile, or hyperbole.

More Challenging Literary Narratives refers to excerpts from essays, short stories, and novels that tend to make moderate use of figurative language, have a more intricate structure and messages conveyed with some subtlety, and may feature somewhat complex interactions between characters.

Complex Literary Narratives refers to excerpts from essays, short stories, and novels that tend to make generous use of ambiguous language and literary devices, feature complex and subtle interactions between characters, often contain challenging context-dependent vocabulary, and typically contain messages and/or meanings that are not explicit but are embedded in the passage.

Sequential, Comparative, and Cause-Effect Relationships	Meanings of Words	Generalizations and Conclusions
■ use various strategies (e.g., timelines, event chains, discussion) to determine whether an event occurred and, if so, when it occurred ■ discuss an issue of interest, determining how past events affected the present ■ locate evidence in a text that explicitly states why an event or a series of events occurred ■ search for patterns or clues (e.g., signal words) that indicate cause-effect relationships	■ use various resources (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus) to explore connotations of familiar words or descriptive language	■ recognize generalizations about the main character in a literary text ■ combine several pieces of information to make a reasonable generalization about a specific character ■ make predictions about characters and events presented in a literary text, verifying or rejecting those predictions and making new ones as they read
■ Determine when (e.g., first, last, before, after) or if an event occurred in uncomplicated passages ■ Recognize clear cause-effect relationships described within a single sentence in a passage	■ Understand the implication of a familiar word or phrase and of simple descriptive language	■ Draw simple generalizations and conclusions about the main characters in uncomplicated literary narratives
■ analyze how an author or narrator uses description, dialogue, and action to suggest relationships between characters in written or nonprint sources (e.g., films, ads) ■ select phrases or statements from a literary text that illustrate how a specific character feels toward others in the text ■ read portions of a literary text, predicting how a person's actions or words would likely impact a specific situation ■ use various strategies (e.g., questioning, role-playing) to determine plausible cause-effect relationships	■ examine specific language in a text and propose plausible interpretations based in part on their own viewpoints and experiences	■ analyze the reasonableness of generalizations by reviewing information presented in the text and from other sources ■ compose generalizations that include qualifying language (e.g., *a few, sometimes*) when limited evidence is presented by the author or narrator ■ determine what a literary narrative is generally about, organizing the text's information into general statements that are supported by details from the text ■ draw reasonable conclusions about people and situations using evidence presented in a text

Uncomplicated Informational Passages refers to materials that tend to contain a limited amount of data, address basic concepts using familiar language and conventional organizational patterns, have a clear purpose, and are written to be accessible.

More Challenging Informational Passages refers to materials that tend to present concepts that are not always stated explicitly and that are accompanied or illustrated by more—and more detailed—supporting data, include some difficult context-dependent words, and are written in a somewhat more demanding and less accessible style.

Complex Informational Passages refers to materials that tend to include a sizable amount of data, present difficult concepts that are embedded (not explicit) in the text, use demanding words and phrases whose meaning must be determined from context, and are likely to include intricate explanations of processes or events.

Table 1 (continued):	**The College Readiness Standards**
The Standards describe what students who score in the specified score ranges are *likely* to know and to be able to do. The ideas for progress help teachers identify ways of enhancing students' learning based on the scores students receive. The score range at the Benchmark level of achievement is highlighted.	

		Main Ideas and Author's Approach	***Supporting Details***
16–19	Standards	■ Identify a clear main idea or purpose of straightforward paragraphs in uncomplicated literary narratives	■ Locate simple details at the sentence and paragraph level in uncomplicated passages ■ Recognize a clear function of a part of an uncomplicated passage
	ideas for progress	■ analyze techniques used by the author of a text to reveal or conceal his or her point of view	■ explain in their own words the significance of specific information in written or nonprint sources ■ distinguish between what is most and least important in a text
20–23	Standards	■ Infer the main idea or purpose of straightforward paragraphs in uncomplicated literary narratives ■ Understand the overall approach taken by an author or narrator (e.g., point of view, kinds of evidence used) in uncomplicated passages	■ Locate important details in uncomplicated passages ■ Make simple inferences about how details are used in passages
	ideas for progress	■ determine how an inference might change based on the inclusion of additional information ■ synthesize information from challenging texts to clarify understanding of important concepts and ideas ■ distinguish between key concepts and subordinate ideas in a text and write a concise summary ■ search for clues that suggest the viewpoint from which a literary text is written or told and determine whether the author's or narrator's point of view is valid or biased ■ analyze the relationship between an author's or narrator's intended message and the rhetorical devices used to convey that message (e.g., language used, evidence provided)	■ gather and interpret details presented in a text, determining the contribution of each to the author's or narrator's intended message ■ identify details that clearly support the key point(s) of written or nonprint sources ■ check inferences against information provided in a text, identifying what is and is not sufficiently supported by the text

Sequential, Comparative, and Cause-Effect Relationships	Meanings of Words	Generalizations and Conclusions
■ Identify relationships between main characters in uncomplicated literary narratives ■ Recognize clear cause-effect relationships within a single paragraph in uncomplicated literary narratives	■ Use context to understand basic figurative language	■ Draw simple generalizations and conclusions about people, ideas, and so on in uncomplicated passages
■ place events from a literary text in chronological order by locating substantial evidence from the text ■ identify similarities and differences between people, objects, events, or ideas, drawing accurate conclusions ■ identify interrelationships between and among people, objects, events, or ideas in written or nonprint sources ■ determine factors that have clearly influenced the outcome of a situation ■ identify statements in texts that clearly state the cause(s) and effect(s) of specific events	■ clarify the meanings of words or descriptive phrases by searching for clues in the text (e.g., sentence structure, context, prefixes/suffixes, spelling patterns)	■ make accurate generalizations about people and events based on evidence presented in the text ■ identify inaccurate generalizations (e.g., stereotypes) in written or nonprint sources ■ identify details in a challenging text that confirm or disprove conclusions drawn by the author or narrator and by the students themselves or their peers ■ make reasoned judgments about ideas and events based on evidence from written or nonprint sources
■ Order simple sequences of events in uncomplicated literary narratives ■ Identify clear relationships between people, ideas, and so on in uncomplicated passages ■ Identify clear cause-effect relationships in uncomplicated passages	■ Use context to determine the appropriate meaning of some figurative and nonfigurative words, phrases, and statements in uncomplicated passages	■ Draw generalizations and conclusions about people, ideas, and so on in uncomplicated passages ■ Draw simple generalizations and conclusions using details that support the main points of more challenging passages
■ analyze the sequence of events in written or nonprint sources ■ map sequences of events in texts or films or from everyday occurrences, defending their reasoning ■ evaluate the extent to which comparisons made by the author or narrator help clarify specific textual relationships ■ search for clues embedded in a text that suggest cause-effect relationships ■ examine events in written or nonprint sources to determine the precipitating cause(s) and final outcome(s)	■ investigate the meanings of words and their possible effect(s) on the perceptions and behavior of people ■ research words and phrases from different sources, identifying their shades of meaning in various contexts or situations	■ defend or challenge the author's or narrator's assertions by locating several key pieces of information in a challenging text ■ make accurate generalizations based on implicit information in the text ■ analyze specific parts of a text, drawing accurate conclusions

Table 1 (continued):	**The College Readiness Standards**
The Standards describe what students who score in the specified score ranges are *likely* to know and to be able to do. The ideas for progress help teachers identify ways of enhancing students' learning based on the scores students receive. The score range at the Benchmark level of achievement is highlighted.	

		Main Ideas and Author's Approach	**Supporting Details**
24–27	Standards	■ Identify a clear main idea or purpose of any paragraph or paragraphs in uncomplicated passages ■ Infer the main idea or purpose of straightforward paragraphs in more challenging passages ■ Summarize basic events and ideas in more challenging passages ■ Understand the overall approach taken by an author or narrator (e.g., point of view, kinds of evidence used) in more challenging passages	■ Locate important details in more challenging passages ■ Locate and interpret minor or subtly stated details in uncomplicated passages ■ Discern which details, though they may appear in different sections throughout a passage, support important points in more challenging passages
	ideas for progress	■ develop a reasonable interpretation of the central theme(s) or main point(s) of a challenging text ■ divide challenging texts into sections, determining what the key points are for each section ■ determine the primary purpose of specific sections of a text or the text as a whole ■ use two different mediums (e.g., sculpture, poetry, photography, music) to present a synopsis of the main idea(s) of a text, thereby expanding understanding of the text's meaning ■ identify subtle evidence that conveys the author's or narrator's point of view in challenging texts ■ change the wording of a text in order to convey a different tone or attitude (e.g., from persuasive to serious)	■ enumerate aspects or characteristics of people, objects, events, or ideas ■ interpret and integrate details in a text in order to verify or contradict a specific point or claim made by the author or narrator ■ recognize and study the evolution of an author's argument(s) as presented in a complex informational text
28–32	Standards	■ Infer the main idea or purpose of more challenging passages or their paragraphs ■ Summarize events and ideas in virtually any passage ■ Understand the overall approach taken by an author or narrator (e.g., point of view, kinds of evidence used) in virtually any passage	■ Locate and interpret minor or subtly stated details in more challenging passages ■ Use details from different sections of some complex informational passages to support a specific point or argument
	ideas for progress	■ identify and analyze ideas in a complex text and write a reasoned synopsis of the text ■ determine the author's or narrator's position toward a specific topic, issue, or idea by noting key facts, claims, and details from the text	■ identify facts embedded in complex informational texts

Sequential, Comparative, and Cause-Effect Relationships	Meanings of Words	Generalizations and Conclusions
■ Order sequences of events in uncomplicated passages ■ Understand relationships between people, ideas, and so on in uncomplicated passages ■ Identify clear relationships between characters, ideas, and so on in more challenging literary narratives ■ Understand implied or subtly stated cause-effect relationships in uncomplicated passages ■ Identify clear cause-effect relationships in more challenging passages	■ Use context to determine the appropriate meaning of virtually any word, phrase, or statement in uncomplicated passages ■ Use context to determine the appropriate meaning of some figurative and nonfigurative words, phrases, and statements in more challenging passages	■ Draw subtle generalizations and conclusions about characters, ideas, and so on in uncomplicated literary narratives ■ Draw generalizations and conclusions about people, ideas, and so on in more challenging passages
■ read texts containing challenging sequences (e.g., flashback, flash-forward), discussing how the order of events affects understanding of the text ■ explain how altering a series of events would likely change the outcome of a situation or the actions of the characters ■ develop an in-depth understanding of the fine distinctions between literary characters in a challenging text by closely examining the language used by the author or narrator ■ identify relationships between ideas and/or people in a challenging text and how those relationships develop over the course of the text ■ identify clues in a challenging text that suggest possible motives for and effects of a person's actions or words ■ read conflicting viewpoints of an event and use textual evidence to identify which one has the most reasonable explanations of causes and effects	■ develop and use strategies for deciphering the meanings of words or phrases embedded in richly figurative or technical contexts ■ analyze figurative and technical language in the media, relating some instances to a personal experience	■ synthesize information in challenging texts, making valid generalizations or conclusions about people and situations ■ confirm or disprove generalizations suggested in texts by providing examples or counterexamples from other sources
■ Order sequences of events in more challenging passages ■ Understand the dynamics between people, ideas, and so on in more challenging passages ■ Understand implied or subtly stated cause-effect relationships in more challenging passages	■ Determine the appropriate meaning of words, phrases, or statements from figurative or somewhat technical contexts	■ Use information from one or more sections of a more challenging passage to draw generalizations and conclusions about people, ideas, and so on
■ determine the chronological sequence of events and the spatial relationships in complex texts (e.g., Dickens, García Marquez, Morrison, Tolstoy) ■ analyze subtle relationships between and among people, objects, events, and ideas in complex texts or films, forming accurate inferences ■ identify implications and possible consequences of actions in complex texts	■ employ strategies for defining a difficult concept, such as identifying its characteristics or providing examples of what it is and is not like	■ examine information from multiple sources and perspectives (including the author's or narrator's) in order to make reasonable generalizations about people, objects, ideas, and situations ■ evaluate the impact of literary devices (e.g., figurative language) on the meaning of a literary narrative

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN READING TEST

WHAT DOES THE PLAN READING TEST MEASURE?

Good readers develop an understanding of texts by becoming actively involved as they read, and in doing so, they use a range of flexible, adaptable strategies that influence their "ability to read the lines, to read between the lines, and to read beyond the lines" (Gray, 1960, p. 17). "Get[ting] students to build understanding of text ideas" is a goal of reading instruction across all grade levels and content areas (Beck, McKeown, Hamilton, & Kucan, 1998, p. 67). To meet this goal requires active reading and the use of various kinds and combinations of skills, skills that can be assessed using various measures.

The PLAN Reading Test, a curriculum-based assessment, measures the reading comprehension skills students have acquired in courses taken up to and including the tenth grade. ACT determines the content of the PLAN Reading Test by identifying the concepts and skills that are taught in classrooms nationwide and considered necessary for future academic and career success. Designed to simulate the types of reading tasks students encounter in their academic work and in life outside of school, the Reading Test measures students' literal-level reading skills as well as their ability to make inferences, draw conclusions, generalize from specific data, and reason logically.

> **"The test should measure what students can do with what they have learned."**
>
> — (ACT, 1996a, p.1)

The passages selected for the Reading Test are from published works of fiction and nonfiction, represent diverse points of view, and are produced by writers who reflect a wide variety of backgrounds. Students' reading skills are assessed in three content areas: Prose Fiction, Humanities, and Social Science. Each passage is preceded by a heading that identifies the passage type (e.g., Prose Fiction), names the author, and may provide a brief note that helps in understanding the passage. The lines of the passage are numbered for reference. Table 2 below provides additional information about the PLAN Reading Test.

Questions in the Reading Test are classified in the general categories of Referring and Reasoning.

Referring. The questions in this category ask about material explicitly stated in a passage. These questions are designed to measure literal reading comprehension. A question is classified in the

Referring category if the information required to answer it is directly given in the passage text. In such questions, there are usually relationships between the language of the passage and that of the question, and the answer to the question is evident in a single sentence, or two adjacent sentences, in the passage. Some Referring questions paraphrase the language of the passage.

Reasoning. The questions in this category ask about meaning implicit in a passage and require cogent reasoning about a passage. These questions are designed to measure "meaning making" by logical inference, analysis, and synthesis. A question is classified in the Reasoning category if it requires inferring or applying a logical process to elicit an answer from the passage, or if it demands that the examinee combine many statements in the passage or interpret entire sections of the text.

Table 2:	**PLAN Reading Test Content Areas** 25 questions, 20 minutes, 3 passages (500 words each)	
Description of Passage		**Percentage of Questions**
Prose Fiction	The test questions in this category are based on passages from short stories or novels.	32%
Humanities	The test questions in this category are based on passages from memoirs and personal essays, and in the content areas of architecture, art, dance, ethics, film, language, literary criticism, music, philosophy, radio, television, or theater.	36%
Social Science	The test questions in this category are based on passages in anthropology, archaeology, biography, business, economics, education, geography, history, political science, psychology, or sociology.	32%

THE NEED FOR THINKING SKILLS

Every student comes to school with the ability to think, but to achieve their goals students need to develop skills such as learning to make new connections between texts and ideas, to understand increasingly complex concepts, and to think through their assumptions. Because of technological advances and the fast pace of our society, it is increasingly important that students not only know information but also know how to critique and manage that information. Students must be provided with the tools for ongoing learning; understanding, analysis, and generalization skills must be developed so that the learner is able to adapt to a variety of situations.

HOW ARE PLAN TEST QUESTIONS LINKED TO THINKING SKILLS?

Our belief in the importance of developing thinking skills in learners was a key factor in the development of PLAN. ACT believes that students' preparation for further learning is best assessed by measuring, as directly as possible, the academic skills that students have acquired and that they will need to perform at the next level of learning. The required academic skills can most directly be assessed by reproducing as faithfully as possible the complexity of the students' schoolwork. Therefore, the PLAN test questions are designed to determine how skillfully students solve problems, grasp implied meanings, draw inferences, evaluate ideas, and make judgments in subject-matter areas important to success in intellectual work both inside and outside school.

Table 3 on pages 17–21 provides sample test questions, organized by score range, that are linked to specific skills within each of the five Reading strands. It is important to note the increasing level of skill with reading that students scoring in the higher score ranges are able to demonstrate. The questions were chosen to illustrate the variety of content as well as the range of complexity within each strand. The sample test questions for the 13–15, 16–19, 20–23, 24–27, and 28–32 score ranges are examples of items answered correctly by 80% or more of the PLAN examinees who obtained scores in each of these five score ranges.

As you review the sample test questions, you will note that each correct answer is marked with an asterisk. Also note that each sample test question includes the passage content area and subcategory for the corresponding passage as well as the page number where the passage is located in the appendix.

> **"Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardour and attended to with diligence."**
>
> — Abigail Adams in a letter to John Quincy Adams

Score Range	Main Ideas and Author's Approach	Sample Test Questions	Passage Information
Table 3:	**PLAN Sample Test Questions by Score Range** *Main Ideas and Author's Approach* Strand		
13–15	Recognize a clear intent of an author or narrator in uncomplicated literary narratives	Throughout the passage, the narrator is most specific in describing: **A.** the thoughts and feelings of the people she's traveling with. **B.* her own feelings upon arriving in a new place. **C.** the wrenching feeling people have before leaving home on a long journey. **D.** the reluctance she felt to take one swift action to change her life.	page 71 Prose Fiction Novel
16–19	Identify a clear main idea or purpose of straightforward paragraphs in uncomplicated literary narratives	The main function of the third paragraph (lines 17–28) is to allow the narrator to explain: **A.** more about her plan to run in the Olympics. **B.** why she and her friends like horses so much. **C.** why the club has to be kept a secret. **D.* some aspects of the secret club she belongs to.	page 72 Prose Fiction Novel
20–23	Understand the overall approach taken by an author or narrator (e.g., point of view, kinds of evidence used) in uncomplicated passages	The words used to describe Valentina Tereshkova in the first paragraph are presented by the author as examples of language that: **A.** describes the skills and abilities of women. **B.** respects the superiority of female attributes. **C.** claims equality for women in the workplace. **D.* devalues the role of an accomplished person.	page 77 Social Science History
24–27	Identify a clear main idea or purpose of any paragraph or paragraphs in uncomplicated passages	Which of the following statements most fully expresses the main idea of the third paragraph (lines 22–32)? **A.** I didn't know where I was. **B.** I was holding the pen in my mouth. **C.* I was ready to beg of whoever opened the door. **D.** My hands were full of books.	page 24 Prose Fiction Short Story
28–32	Summarize events and ideas in virtually any passage	It can reasonably be inferred from the passage that the story of the fictional character Sarah Phillips is drawn from the actual life of: **A.* the author Andrea Lee. **B.** the author's mother. **C.** Paule Marshall's Selina Boyce. **D.** The writer Lucille Clifton.	page 79 Humanities Literary Criticism

Score Range	Supporting Details	Sample Test Questions	Passage Information
13–15	Locate basic facts (e.g., names, dates, events) clearly stated in a passage	According to the passage, how does Miss Ettie spend most of her time? **A.** Watching television ***B.** Working in her yard **C.** Listening to the radio **D.** Visiting the old farm	page 73 Prose Fiction Short Story
16–19	Locate simple details at the sentence and paragraph level in uncomplicated passages	Which were the two states that offered land and money to Congress to relocate the seat of federal government? ***A.** Virginia and Maryland **B.** New Jersey and Virginia **C.** Maryland and Pennsylvania **D.** New Jersey and Massachusetts	page 78 Social Science History
20–23	Locate important details in uncomplicated passages	According to the passage, Rainy Mountain is a: **A.** towering peak. **B.** prominent part of the Wichita Range. **C.** comparatively recent landmark. ***D.** single knoll.	page 80 Humanities Memoir
24–27	Discern which details, though they may appear in different sections throughout a passage, support important points in more challenging passages	The story mentioned in lines 51–54 is relevant to the central idea of the final paragraph because it is about a: **A.** family struggling with tough financial decisions. **B.** woman losing a valuable possession. **C.** mother trying to control her daughter's rebelliousness. ***D.** daughter achieving equality with her mother.	page 79 Humanities Literary Criticism
28–32	Use details from different sections of some complex informational passages to support a specific point or argument	The passage suggests that as a direct result of the introduction of keyed brass instruments, American bands changed by: **A.** growing larger. **B.** ceasing to rely on British music as a model. ***C.** achieving a more unified sound. **D.** having a more interesting mix of woodwind and brass instruments.	page 81 Humanities Music

Table 3: PLAN Sample Test Questions by Score Range
Supporting Details Strand

Score Range	Sequential, Comparative, and Cause-Effect Relationships	Sample Test Questions	Passage Information
Table 3:	**PLAN Sample Test Questions by Score Range** *Sequential, Comparative, and Cause-Effect Relationships* Strand		
13–15	Recognize clear cause-effect relationships described within a single sentence in a passage	The narrator states that the taste of pink mullet and green figs pleased her because the dish was: A. a distraction from her sadness. B. symbolic of her new life. *C. cooked by her grandmother. D. her favorite food.	page 71 Prose Fiction Novel
16–19	Identify relationships between main characters in uncomplicated literary narratives	The passage suggests that in relationship to the narrator, the mother and grandmother: *A. have somewhat different discipline styles. B. have rarely spoken to each other about discipline. C. are often upset and angry at the child. D. are in complete agreement about discipline.	page 74 Prose Fiction Short Story
20–23	Order simple sequences of events in uncomplicated literary narratives	Mrs. Ellis, Mr. Greer, and Effie Higgins' boy were all faces in Emma's life at what time? A. After her move to the country B. During the warmth of previous summers C. Before the weather got too bad for company *D. During previous winters	page 75 Prose Fiction Short Story
24–27	Understand implied or subtly stated cause-effect relationships in uncomplicated passages	According to the passage, the imaginations of those seeing the Rainy Mountain landscape are stimulated by the: A. loss of all thoughts of creation. *B. solitariness of objects. C. greenness of the summer prairie. D. confusion of objects.	page 80 Humanities Memoir
28–32	Understand the dynamics between people, ideas, and so on in more challenging passages	It can most reasonably be inferred from the first paragraph that in comparison to Sarah Phillips' childhood, her parents' childhoods were more: A. distinguished. B. inward-directed. *C. limited. D. carefree.	page 79 Humanities Literary Criticism

Score Range	Meanings of Words	Sample Test Questions	Passage Information
13–15	Understand the implication of a familiar word or phrase and of simple descriptive language	As it is used in line 17, the word *home* most nearly refers to: A. Clara and Francey's home. B. the home place in the country. C. the narrator's home. *D. a nursing home.	page 73 Prose Fiction Short Story
16–19	Use context to understand basic figurative language	It can be inferred that the narrator's use of the word *lucky* in line 23 is meant to convey the: A. father's belief that he will have a good climb on Mt. McKinley the following week. B. narrator's belief that the fog is a good omen for her father's upcoming climb of Mt. McKinley. C. father's sense of relief at having more time to spend with his daughter because of the delay. *D. narrator's happiness at the chance to visit her father longer than she originally expected to.	page 76 Prose Fiction Short Story
20–23	Use context to determine the appropriate meaning of some figurative and nonfigurative words, phrases, and statements in uncomplicated passages	As it is used in line 30, the word *punctuate* most nearly means to: A. indicate frustration with. B. eradicate memories of. *C. emphasize with gestures. D. write grammatical marks on.	page 76 Prose Fiction Short Story
24–27	Use context to determine the appropriate meaning of virtually any word, phrase, or statement in uncomplicated passages	As it is used in line 37, the word *extracted* most nearly means to: A. get rid of completely, usually by killing. B. select from a writing or discourse. *C. obtain by much effort from an unwilling person. D. determine by lengthy calculation.	page 74 Prose Fiction Short Story
28–32	Determine the appropriate meaning of words, phrases, or statements from figurative or somewhat technical contexts	As it is used in line 51, the phrase *equal to* most precisely means: *A. capable enough to meet the challenge of. B. the same as or an exact duplicate of. C. tranquil of mood in response to. D. without variation in reacting to.	page 79 Humanities Literary Criticism

Table 3: PLAN Sample Test Questions by Score Range
Meanings of Words Strand

Score Range	Generalizations and Conclusions	Sample Test Questions	Passage Information
	Table 3: PLAN Sample Test Questions by Score Range *Generalizations and Conclusions* Strand		
13–15	Draw simple generalizations and conclusions about the main characters in uncomplicated literary narratives	In the context of the passage, the fact that Sam and Ardis drove down from their home to tell Emma of her impending move suggests that they: A. didn't have a telephone. B. needed a night away from their unruly children. *C. knew Emma would continue to refuse to leave. D. simply wanted to make a pleasant visit.	page 75 Prose Fiction Short Story
16–19	Draw simple generalizations and conclusions about people, ideas, and so on in uncomplicated literary narratives	As it is revealed in the passage, the mother's primary concern seems to be to: A. find out where the grandmother bought the drum. *B. convince her daughter to behave. C. convince the grandmother to punish the narrator. D. teach her daughter not to yell like a child.	page 74 Prose Fiction Short Story
20–23	Draw generalizations and conclusions about people, ideas, and so on in uncomplicated passages	Lines 37–44 suggest that Miss Ettie is all of the following EXCEPT: *A. witty. B. resourceful. C. industrious. D. independent.	page 73 Prose Fiction Short Story
24–27	Draw generalizations and conclusions about people, ideas, and so on in more challenging passages	A person who is able to look at a room and describe where each object in that room is located would, using the passage's language, be described as having a sound sense of: A. linguistic space. B. right-hemisphere function. C. spatial modality. *D. topographic space.	page 82 Humanities Language
28–32	Use information from one or more sections of a more challenging passage to draw generalizations and conclusions about people, ideas, and so on	Which of the following does the author apparently NOT believe about American cities between the Civil War and World War I? *A. Industrial growth lessened the gap between rich and poor. B. Immigration washed away homogeneity. C. Housing patterns isolated classes and groups. D. Electric street railways permitted escape from urban areas.	page 83 Humanities Music

THINKING YOUR WAY THROUGH THE PLAN TEST

In our increasingly complex society, students' ability to think critically and make informed decisions is more important than ever. The workplace demands new skills and knowledge and continual learning; information bombards consumers through media and the Internet; familiar assumptions and values often come into question. More than ever before, students in today's classrooms face a future when they will need to adapt quickly to change, to think about issues in rational and creative ways, to cope with ambiguities, and to find means of applying information to new situations.

Classroom teachers are integrally involved in preparing today's students for their futures. Such preparation must include the development of thinking skills such as problem solving, decision making, and inferential and evaluative thinking. These are, in fact, the types of skills and understandings that underlie the test questions on PLAN.

HOW CAN ANALYZING TEST QUESTIONS BUILD THINKING SKILLS?

On pages 24–26, you will find an additional passage and sample test questions. The sample test questions provide a link to a strand, a Standard, and a score range. Each sample test question includes a description of the skills and understandings students must demonstrate in order to determine the best

answer. The descriptions provide a series of strategies students typically might employ as they work through each test question. Analyzing test questions in this way, as test developers do to produce a Test Question Rationale, can provide students with a means of understanding the knowledge and skills embedded in the test questions and an opportunity to explore why an answer choice is correct or incorrect.

Providing students with strategies such as these encourages them to take charge of their thinking and learning. The sample test questions that appear in Table 3 on pages 17–21 can be used to develop additional Test Question Rationales.

> **"Learning is fundamentally about** *making and maintaining connections ...* **among concepts, ideas, and meanings."**
>
> — American Association for Higher Education, American College Personnel Association, & National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, June 1998

The difficulty of going about in shirtsleeves on a January night in Manhattan is hard to describe. If I had not moved fast, I am sure that I would have frozen to death. No one took notice, for they must have assumed
5 that I was dashing from my rooms or my office. I dashed and dashed and dashed, until I discovered that I was running the length of a city as long and slim as a serpent. No place would take me in, not even the Harvard Club. The same man in an apron seemed to be
10 in front of every restaurant door, and he made the same negative sign every time he saw me.

I wondered why it was that in a vast sea of buildings and warmly heated rooms I could find no shelter. As I loped along, I thought of all the empty
15 chairs in large salons, of the empty marble benches by heated pools, of the warm deserted galleries in lovely museums. If I would not quickly find shelter, I would die. I knew that I could always commit a crime, for which I would be taken indoors almost immediately and
20 given room and board for a time, but that was no way to inaugurate life in a new country.

I gathered my courage about me, and started to pound on a huge oaken door. I didn't know where I was, but only that it was the biggest, warmest-looking door I
25 had ever seen. I thought to beg of whoever opened it that I might work in the kitchen and sleep in the storeroom. I decided to bribe him with my fountain pen—a beautiful Swiss instrument of ebony, with gold fittings—so I took it from my case and was holding it in
30 my mouth as I fumbled with the books that were trying to fall to the ground. There I was, pen in mouth, in my shirt, my hands full of books, when a servant appeared.

I couldn't say anything, because the pen was in my mouth. He jumped forward to help me with my spilling
35 case, and, having rescued my books, he said, "Go right in. They've been at it for about an hour and a half."

"Where are they?" I asked.

"The top floor. They're all here tonight."

"Oh."

40 "And you'll be glad to know that Martha is with them."

"Oh yes," I said, "What would it be without Martha?"

I went up the stairs, winding around a large dimly
45 lit well that rose into the darkness for seven or eight stories. As I made my way, I could see stars shining through a skylight. On each level, different musical compositions were being played in unseen rooms. I didn't know if this were a music school, a
50 boardinghouse for string musicians, or a dream, but I ascended in the warmth until, on the top floor, I saw a row of strong lights. There was no sense in hiding on the staircase, so I entered the night class.

In a room that echoed from the upwelling chamber
55 music, about forty men formed a crescent before a raised platform upon which stood a woman who, in the light that glared upon her, seemed to have the proportions of a classical statue. I sat down at an easel, just like everyone else, and rolled up my sleeves the
60 way they had done.

I decided to try my hand at a sketch. Confident of my invisibility, I calmly opened the box of charcoals and took one out.

Students reading this passage and recognizing it as a prose fiction narrative may enjoy reading it. The passage is written in the first person, and much of the pleasure comes from the personality of the narrator and the reader's ability to see and feel the world through his eyes. Most of the test questions, therefore, touch upon how well the student-readers are able to come to know the narrator, his environment, his troubles, and the circumstances he is dealing with.

To answer the questions that correspond to this prose fiction passage, the student needs to rely on various kinds and combinations of thinking skills. Some questions focus on literal reading skills, such as the ability to recognize explicitly stated material. Other questions require more complex reading strategies, such as recognizing how details relate to the main idea of a passage, drawing conclusions implied but not explicitly stated in the passage, and recognizing appropriate generalizations. These are but a few examples of the types of questions that examine the student's ability to analyze and synthesize the information and rhetorical structure of a passage.

For students to read inferentially, they must connect explicit information in a text to relevant world knowledge or to other parts of the text in order to make interpretations. Inferring is a meaning-making process because a reader expands knowledge by proposing and evaluating hypotheses about the meaning of the text; to infer well requires the thoughtful use of such strategies.

Test Question Rationale	
Main Ideas and Author's Approach	■ Identify a clear main idea or purpose of any paragraph or paragraphs in uncomplicated passages ■ 24–27 score range

1. Which of the following statements most fully expresses the main idea of the third paragraph (lines 22–32)?

   A. I didn't know where I was.
   B. I was holding the pen in my mouth.
   *C. I was ready to beg of whoever opened the door.
   D. My hands were full of books.

To select the correct answer in question 1, the reader must return to the third paragraph and, as he or she rereads it, realize that choices A, B, and D, while containing explicitly stated details, do not express the main idea of the paragraph. To arrive at the correct answer, "I was ready to beg of whoever opened the door" (choice C), the reader might find the relationship among the details of "not knowing where he was," "holding the pen in his mouth," and his "hands were full of books" (choices A, B, and D) as well as refer back to the two preceding paragraphs to realize that the narrator has reached a desperate point. Additionally, the reader must be able to interpret the nuances in the language that appears in the third paragraph by translating the text in the passage "*I thought* to beg of whoever opened it . . ." to the text in the correct response "I *was ready* to beg. . . ."

2. According to the last two paragraphs, which of the following contributed most to the man's calmness?

   ***F.** The others paying no attention to him
   G. That he loved sketching with charcoals
   H. That he could roll up his sleeves
   J. The chamber music echoing in the room

Another example of a question that taps inferential comprehension is question 2. To select the correct answer, much careful reading is required since the sense of calmness that falls over the man is as much a consequence of his invisibility as it is of the ambience of the building and the room. A description of the building and the room begins in line 44 and continues until line 60. The reader begins to get a sense of the ambience as a description of the narrator ascending the stairs is provided: "I could see stars shining through a skylight" and "On each level, different musical compositions were being played in unseen rooms" and "I ascended in the warmth." Once again, the reader is required to look for relationships among the details presented in the text—to read between the lines—in order to determine the answer. While the narrator had clearly entered a calming environment—a building that contained skylights so that the stars were visible, that echoed with chamber music, and contained a room filled with forty men positioned in a crescent sketching a model—the factor that contributed the most to the man's calmness is best expressed in choice F: "The others paying no attention to him." The reader is required to combine the information that is provided in two different phrases—"I sat down at an easel, just like everyone else" and "Confident of my invisibility"—as well as to use the nuances of language and the strategy of combining information to conclude that it was the man's "invisibility" that most contributed to his sense of calm.

3. Which of the following best describes how the main character changes from the beginning of the story to the end?

   A. From courageous to timid
   B. From forthright to unsociable
   ***C.** From despairing to peaceful
   D. From dangerous to dispassionate

The last example from this prose fiction passage, question 3, taps the critical comprehension skills of the reader. In order to select the correct answer, choice C, "From despairing to peaceful," the reader needs to apply background knowledge to the author's ideas and then develop a generalization, to "read beyond the lines." The reader would probably first adopt the strategy of considering the meaning of the words in the answer choices and then attempting to match them to the actions or details of the passage. Then the reader needs to determine the change that takes place in the character between the beginning and the end of the passage. The reader needs to recognize in the details that the narrator was "going about in shirtsleeves on a January night," "No one took notice," "No place would take me in," and in the statements that "I wondered why it was that . . . I could find no shelter" and "If I would not quickly find shelter, I would die" an apt description of despair. Likewise, the reader needs to use the details presented in the concluding paragraphs to determine the transformation the character undergoes: "Confident of my invisibility, I calmly opened the box of charcoals and took one out."

THE ASSESSMENT-INSTRUCTION LINK

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO LINK ASSESSMENT WITH INSTRUCTION?

Assessment provides feedback to the learner and the teacher. It bridges the gap between expectations and reality. Assessment can gauge the learners' readiness to extend their knowledge in a given area, measure knowledge gains, identify needs, and determine the learners' ability to transfer what was learned to a new setting.

When teachers use assessment tools to gather information about their students, then modify instruction accordingly, the assessment process becomes an integral part of teaching and learning. Using assessment to inform instruction can help teachers create a successful learning environment.

Students can use assessment as a tool to help them revise and rethink their work, to help integrate prior knowledge with new learning, and to apply their knowledge to new situations. Connecting assessment to classroom instruction can help both teachers and students take charge of thinking and learning.

As teachers review student performances on various measures, they can reexamine how to help students learn. As Peter Airasian, the author of *Classroom Assessment*, says, "Assessment is not an end in itself, but a means to another end, namely,

> *"Every* objective, *every* lesson plan, *every* classroom activity, and *every* assessment method should focus on helping students achieve those [significant] outcomes that will help students both in the classroom and beyond."
>
> — Kay Burke, editor of *Authentic Assessment: A Collection*

good decision making" (p. 19). Linking assessment and instruction prompts both teachers and students to take on new roles and responsibilities. Through reflecting together on their learning, students and teachers can reevaluate their goals and embark on a process of continuous growth.

ARE YOUR STUDENTS DEVELOPING THE NECESSARY SKILLS?

Because PLAN is administered during the tenth grade, it allows for a midpoint review of progress students are making in high school. The PLAN results can be used to provide direction for educational and career planning that will allow for adjustment in students' course work to achieve goals after high school. At this stage in their high school careers, students should be encouraged to explore a range of educational and career options based on their current interests and most recent achievements.

EXPLORE and PLAN are developmentally and conceptually linked to the ACT and thus provide a coherent framework for students and counselors and a consistent skills focus for teachers from Grades 8 through 12.

To facilitate the review of students' progress, PLAN and ACT scores are linked through a common score scale and students receive an estimated ACT Composite score along with their PLAN scores. These scores can be used to evaluate students' readiness for college course work and to provide guidance as they prepare for their transition to college or further training. With an ever-increasing number of high school graduates entering college, it becomes the schools' responsibility to ensure that its graduates have mastered the prerequisite skills necessary for success in entry-level courses.

As students and others review test scores from EXPLORE, PLAN, and the ACT, they should be aware that ACT's data clearly reveal that students' ACT test scores are directly related to preparation for college. Students who take rigorous high school courses, which ACT has defined as core college preparatory courses, achieve much higher test scores than students who do not. ACT has defined core college preparatory course work as four or more years of English, and three or more years each of mathematics, social studies, and natural science.

ACT works with colleges to help them develop guidelines that place students in courses that are appropriate for their level of achievement as measured by the ACT. In doing this work, ACT has gathered course grade and test score data from a large number of first-year students across a wide range of postsecondary institutions. These data provide an overall measure of what it takes to be successful in a standard first-year college course. Data from 98 institutions and over 90,000 students were used to establish the ACT College Readiness Benchmark Scores, which are median course placement scores achieved on the ACT that are directly reflective of student success in a college course.

Success is defined as a 50 percent chance that a student will earn a grade of B or better. The courses are the ones most commonly taken by first-year students in the areas of English, mathematics, social studies, and science, namely English Composition, College Algebra, an entry-level College Social Studies/Humanities course, and College Biology. The ACT scores established as the ACT College Readiness Benchmark Scores are 18 on the English Test, 22 on the Mathematics Test, 21 on the Reading Test, and 24 on the Science Test. The College Readiness Benchmark Scores were based

upon a sample of postsecondary institutions from across the United States. The data from these institutions were weighted to reflect postsecondary institutions nationally. The Benchmark Scores are median course placement values for these institutions and as such represent a *typical* set of expectations.

College Readiness Benchmark Scores have also been developed for EXPLORE and for PLAN, to indicate a student's probable readiness for college-level work, in the same courses named above, by the time the student graduates from high school. The EXPLORE and PLAN College Readiness Benchmark Scores were developed using records of students who had taken EXPLORE, PLAN, and the ACT (four years of matched data). Using either EXPLORE subject-area scores or PLAN subject-area scores, we estimated the conditional probabilities associated with meeting or exceeding the corresponding ACT Benchmark Score. Thus, each EXPLORE (1–25) or PLAN (1–32) score was associated with an estimated probability of meeting or exceeding the relevant ACT Benchmark Score. We then identified the EXPLORE and PLAN scores, at Grades 8, 9, 10, and 11, that came the closest to a 0.5 probability of meeting or exceeding the ACT Benchmark Score, by subject area. These scores were selected as the EXPLORE and PLAN Benchmark Scores.

All the Benchmark Scores are given in Table 4. Note that, for example, the first row of the table should be read as follows: An eighth-grade student who scores 13, or a ninth-grade student who scores 14, on the EXPLORE English Test has a 50 percent probability of scoring 18 on the ACT English Test; and a tenth-grade student who scores 15, or an eleventh-grade student who scores 17, on the PLAN English Test has a 50 percent probability of scoring 18 on the ACT English Test.

Table 4: **College Readiness Benchmark Scores**					
	EXPLORE Test Score		PLAN Test Score		ACT
Subject Test	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Test Score
English	13	14	15	17	18
Mathematics	17	18	19	21	22
Reading	15	16	17	19	21
Science	20	20	21	23	24

USING ASSESSMENT INFORMATION TO HELP SUPPORT LOW-SCORING STUDENTS

Students who receive a Composite score of 16 or below on PLAN will most likely require additional guidance and support from their teachers and family in order to meet their academic goals, particularly if one of those goals is to attend a four-year college or university.

College admission policies vary widely in their level of selectivity. ACT Composite scores typically required by colleges having varying levels of selectivity are shown in Table 5. This information provides only general guidelines. There is considerable overlap among admission categories, and colleges often make exceptions to their stated admission policies.

Table 5: **The Link Between ACT Composite Scores and College Admission Policies**

Admission Policy	Typical Class Rank of Admitted Students	Typical ACT Composite Scores of Admitted Students
Highly Selective	Majority of accepted freshmen in top 10% of high school graduating class	25–30
Selective	Majority of accepted freshmen in top 25% of high school graduating class	21–26
Traditional	Majority of accepted freshmen in top 50% of high school graduating class	18–24
Liberal	Some of accepted freshmen from lower half of high school graduating class	17–22
Open	All high school graduates accepted to limit of capacity	16–21

A student's PLAN Composite score is one indicator of the student's readiness for college-level work. For each student's PLAN Composite score, an estimated ACT score range is reported. The estimated ACT Composite score range refers to the score a student would be expected to obtain in the fall of his or her senior year. The estimated fall twelfth-grade score ranges for students who take PLAN in the fall of tenth grade are reported in Table 6.

Table 6 indicates that, for a PLAN Composite score of 13 in fall of tenth grade, the lower limit of the estimated fall twelfth-grade ACT Composite score range is given as 13 and the upper limit is given as 17. That is, an estimated ACT Composite score range of 13 to 17 is reported for students who receive PLAN Composite scores of 13 when tested in the fall of tenth grade.

In interpreting the estimated ACT Composite score ranges, it's important to note that EXPLORE, PLAN, and the ACT are curriculum-based testing programs. This is one reason ACT expects that some students will fall short of or improve upon their estimated ACT score ranges. If students do not maintain good academic work in high school, their actual ACT Composite scores may fall short of their estimated score ranges. The converse is also true; some students who improve their academic performance may earn ACT Composite scores higher than estimated.

As students review their PLAN test scores, they should be encouraged to think about their postsecondary education or training plans. Test scores should be discussed in the context of students' future goals, previous academic preparation, and plans for future high school course work. As educators and parents look over students' content-area test scores, the way students' scores match up with their goals will become clear. For example, a student who wishes to become a journalist will need a solid reading background. A high Reading Test score can be used as evidence that the goal is realistic. A low score suggests the student should consider ways of improving his or her reading skills through additional course work and/or added effort in the area.

Table 6:	Estimated ACT Composite Score Ranges	
PLAN Composite Score	**Estimated ACT Composite Score Range**	
	Low Score	**High Score**
1	8	10
2	8	10
3	8	10
4	8	11
5	8	11
6	9	12
7	10	13
8	11	14
9	11	14
10	11	15
11	12	15
12	13	17
13	13	17
14	14	18
15	15	19
16	16	20
17	17	21
18	19	23
19	20	24
20	21	25
21	22	26
22	23	27
23	24	28
24	26	30
25	26	30
26	27	31
27	28	32
28	29	33
29	30	33
30	31	34
31	33	35
32	33	35

"A rigorous high school curriculum is often the strongest predictor of entering college and earning a degree. . . . This suggests that for students who plan to go to college, demanding coursework as early as eighth grade will increase their chances for college success. As [high school] course requirements become standard, it is important to ensure that the corresponding course content prepares students for the rigors of college" (Noeth & Wimberly, 2002, p. 17).

In addition to planning for high school course work, taking remedial classes if necessary, and beginning to match career goals to known talents, tenth-grade students who want to attend a four-year college or university should begin educating themselves about such schools. Some students, particularly those whose parents did not attend college, may not have access to information about postsecondary education. "Though many students . . . attending urban schools may have the desire and expectation, they may not have the skills, knowledge, and information they need to enter and complete a postsecondary program. Many . . . do not have the informational resources, personal support networks, continual checkpoints, or structured programs to make college exploration and planning a theme throughout their daily lives. . . . Students need their schools, parents, and others to help them plan for college and their future careers" (Noeth & Wimberly, 2002, p. 4).

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A LOW-SCORING STUDENT?

Low-achieving students tend to be those students who score low on standardized tests. Students who slip behind are the likeliest to drop out and least likely to overcome social and personal disadvantages.

According to Judson Hixson, a researcher at the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL), students who are at risk should be considered in a new light:

> Students are placed "at risk" when they experience a significant mismatch between their circumstances and needs, and the capacity or willingness of the school to accept, accommodate, and respond to them in a manner that supports and enables their maximum social, emotional, and intellectual growth and development.

> As the degree of mismatch increases, so does the likelihood that they will fail to either complete their elementary and secondary education, or more importantly, to benefit from it in a manner that ensures they have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to be successful in the next stage of their lives—that is, to successfully pursue postsecondary education, training, or meaningful employment and to participate in, and contribute to, the social, economic, and political life of their community and society as a whole.

> The focus of our efforts, therefore, should be on enhancing our institutional and professional capacity and responsiveness, rather than categorizing and penalizing students for simply being who they are. (Hixson, 1993, p. 2)

Hixson's views reveal the necessity of looking at all the variables that could affect students' performance, not just focusing on the students themselves.

Low-achieving students may demonstrate some of the following characteristics:

- difficulty with the volume of work to be completed;

- low reading and writing skills;

- low motivation;

- low self-esteem;

- poor study habits;

- lack of concentration;

- reluctance to participate in class or to ask for help with tasks/assignments; and

- test anxiety.

Many of these characteristics are interconnected. For example, a low-scoring student cannot complete the volume of work a successful student can if it takes a much longer time for that low-scoring student to decipher text passages because of low reading skills. There is also the issue of intrinsic motivation: students may have little desire to keep trying if they do not habitually experience success.

Some low-scoring students may not lack motivation or good study habits, but may still be in the process of learning English; still others may have learning disabilities that make it difficult for them to do complex work in one or two content areas.

Again, we must not focus only on the students themselves, but also consider other variables that could affect their academic performance, such as

- job or home responsibilities that take time away from school responsibilities;

- parental attitude toward and involvement in students' school success;

- students' relationships with their peers;

- lack of adequate support and resources; and

- lack of opportunities.

For example, some students who score low on tests are never introduced to a curriculum that challenges them or that addresses their particular needs: "Much of the student stratification within academic courses reflects the social and economic stratification of society. Schools using tracking systems or other methods that ultimately place low-income and marginal students in lower-level academic courses are not adequately preparing them to plan for postsecondary education, succeed in college, and prepare for lifelong learning" (Noeth & Wimberly, 2002, p. 18).

As Barbara Means and Michael Knapp have suggested, many schools need to reconstruct their curricula, employing instructional strategies that help students to understand how experts think through problems or tasks, to discover multiple ways to solve a problem, to complete complex tasks by receiving support (e.g., cues, modifications), and to engage actively in classroom discussions (1991).

Many individuals and organizations are interested in helping students succeed in the classroom and in the future. For example, the Network for Equity in Student Achievement (NESA), a group of large urban school systems, and the Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN), a group of school districts in diverse suburban areas and small cities, are organizations that are dedicated to initiating strategies that will close the achievement gap among groups of students. Many schools and districts have found participation in such consortia to be helpful.

According to Michael Sadowski, editor of the *Harvard Education Letter,* administrators and teachers who are frustrated by persistent achievement gaps within their school districts "have started to look for answers within the walls of their own schools. They're studying school records, disaggregating test score and grade data, interviewing students and teachers, administrating questionnaires—essentially becoming researchers—to identify exactly where problems exist and to design solutions" (Sadowski, 2001, p. 1).

A student may get a low score on a standardized test for any of a number of reasons. To reduce the probability of that outcome, the following pages provide information about factors that affect student performance as well as some suggestions about what educators and students can do before students' achievement is assessed on standardized tests like PLAN.

WHAT ARE SOME FACTORS THAT AFFECT STUDENT PERFORMANCE?

Many factors affect student achievement. Diane Ravitch, a research professor at New York University, has identified several positive factors in her book *The Schools We Deserve: Reflections on the Educational Crisis of Our Time* (1985, pp. 276 and 294). These factors, which were common to those schools that were considered effective in teaching students, include

■ a principal who has a clearly articulated vision for the school, and the leadership skills to empower teachers to work toward that vision;

■ a strong, clearly thought-out curriculum in which knowledge gained in one grade is built upon in the next;

■ dedicated educators working in their field of expertise;

■ school-wide commitment to learning, to becoming a "community of learners";

■ a blend of students from diverse backgrounds;

■ "high expectations for all" students; and

■ systematic monitoring of student progress through an assessment system.

There are also factors that have a negative impact on student achievement. For example, some students "may not know about, know how, or feel entitled to take academic advantage of certain opportunities, like college preparatory courses, college entrance exams, and extracurricular learning opportunities" (Goodwin, 2000, p. 3).

All students need to be motivated to perform well academically, and they need informed guidance in sorting out their educational/career aspirations. Teachers who challenge their students by providing a curriculum that is rigorous and relevant to their world and needs (Brewer, Rees, & Argys, 1995; Gay, 2000), and who have a degree and certification in the area in which they teach (Ingersoll, 1998) and ample opportunities to collaborate with their peers (McCollum, 2000), are more likely to engender students' success in school.

MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

Using assessment information, such as that provided by the EXPLORE, PLAN, and ACT tests in ACT's Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS), can help bring into view factors that may affect—either positively or negatively—student performance. Reviewing and interpreting assessment information can encourage conversations between parents and teachers about what is best for students. Using data is one way of making the assumptions you have about your students and school, or the needs of students, visible.

Collecting assessment information in a systematic way can help teachers in various ways. It can help teachers see more clearly what is happening in their classrooms, provide evidence that the method of teaching they're using really works, and determine what is most important to do next. As teachers become active teacher-researchers, they can gain a sense of control and efficacy that contributes to their sense of accomplishment about what they do each day.

There are many different types of assessment information that a school or school district can collect. Some types yield quantitative data (performance described in numerical terms), others qualitative data (performance described in nonnumerical terms, such as text, audio, video, or photographs). All types, when properly analyzed, can yield useful insights into student learning. For example, schools and teachers can collect information from

■ standardized tests (norm- or criterion-referenced tests);

■ performance assessments (such as portfolios, projects, artifacts, presentations);

■ peer assessments;

■ progress reports (qualitative, quantitative, or both) on student skills and outcomes;

■ self-reports, logs, journals; and

■ rubrics and rating scales.

Reviewing student learning information in the context of demographic data may also provide insight and information about specific groups of students, like low-scoring students. Schools therefore would benefit by collecting data about

- enrollment, mobility, and housing trends;

- staff and student attendance rates and tardiness rates;

- dropout, retention, and graduation rates;

- gender, race, ethnicity, and health;

- percent of free/reduced lunch and/or public assistance;

- level of language proficiency;

- staff/student ratios;

- number of courses taught by teachers outside their endorsed content area;

- retirement projections and turnover rates; and

- teaching and student awards.

What Can Educators and Students Do Before Students Take Standardized Tests?

Integrate assessment and instruction. Because PLAN is curriculum-based, the most important prerequisite for optimum performance on the test is a sound, comprehensive educational program. This "preparation" begins long before any test date. Judith Langer, the director of the National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement, conducted a five-year study that compared the English programs of typical schools to those that get outstanding results. Schools with economically disadvantaged and diverse student populations in California, Florida, New York, and Texas predominated the study. Langer's study revealed that in higher performing schools "test preparation has been integrated into the class time, as part of the ongoing English language arts learning goals." This means that teachers discuss the demands of high-stakes tests and how they "relate to district and state standards and expectations as well as to their curriculum" (Langer, 2000, p. 6).

Emphasize core courses. ACT research conducted in urban schools both in 1998 and 1999 shows that urban school students can substantially improve their readiness for college by taking a more demanding sequence of core academic courses in high school. Urban students taking a more rigorous sequence of courses in mathematics and science and finding success in those courses score at or above national averages on the ACT. Regardless of gender, ethnicity, or family income, those students who elect to take four or more years of rigorous English courses and three or more years of rigorous course work in mathematics, science, and social studies earn higher ACT scores and are more successful in college than those who have not taken those courses (ACT & Council of Great City Schools, 1999). Subsequent research has substantiated these findings and confirmed the value of rigor in the core courses (ACT, 2004; ACT & The Education Trust, 2004).

Teach test-taking strategies. Students may be helped by being taught specific test-taking strategies, such as the following:

- Learn to pace yourself.

- Know the directions and understand the answer sheet.

- Read carefully and thoroughly.

- Answer easier questions first; skip harder questions and return to them later.

- Review answers and check work, if time allows.

- Mark the answer sheet quickly and neatly; avoid erasure marks on the answer sheet.

- Answer every question (you are not penalized for guessing on PLAN).

- Become familiar with test administration procedures.

- Read all the answer choices before you decide which is the best answer.

Students are more likely to perform at their best on a test if they are comfortable with the test format, know appropriate test-taking strategies, and are aware of the test administration procedures. Test preparation activities that help students perform better in the short term will be helpful to those students who have little experience taking standardized tests or who are unfamiliar with the format of PLAN.

What Do the PLAN Reading Test Results Indicate About Low-Scoring Students?

Students who score below 16 on the PLAN Reading Test are likely to have some or all of the knowledge and skills described in the PLAN Reading College Readiness Standards for the 13–15 range. In fact, they may well have some of the skills listed in the 16–19 range. Low-scoring students may be able to demonstrate skills in a classroom setting that they are not able to demonstrate in a testing situation. Therefore, these students need to develop consistency in demonstrating these skills. Practicing these skills, literal and inferential, with various types and levels of materials (both print and nonprint) will likely engender transfer of these skills to various academic contexts and situations.

The EPAS Reading College Readiness Standards indicate that students who score below 16 tend to be able to

- Recognize a clear intent of an author or narrator in uncomplicated literary narratives

- Locate basic facts (e.g., names, dates, events) clearly stated in a passage

- Determine when (e.g., first, last, before, after) or if an event occurred in uncomplicated passages

- Recognize clear cause-effect relationships described within a single sentence in a passage

- Understand the implication of a familiar word or phrase and of simple descriptive language

- Draw simple generalizations and conclusions about the main characters in uncomplicated literary narratives

In sum, these students tend to show some skill in reading uncomplicated passages. They tend to read and comprehend at a literal level, understanding ideas that are clearly stated or that are paraphrased for them in the text. They are typically able to find simple facts in a text. These students likely need additional assistance reading and interpreting texts that are more challenging, especially texts in Social Science and Natural Science, which are two of the four content areas represented on the Reading Test of the ACT (ACT's college admissions test).

ACT Reading Passages. **Prose Fiction** and **Humanities** passages on the ACT Reading Test are likely to be *narratives.* While not all of these passages (especially those in the Humanities) will have all of the common narrative elements, such as dialogue and plot, the passages typically have a strong personal voice and clear point of view. Technical explanations of the elements of a jazz song or an Impressionist painting, for example, would generally be avoided, while an essay by a jazz musician or a painter about what it is like to be an artist would be used on the test. **Social Science** and **Natural Science** passages are primarily *informational.* These passages emphasize such elements of science as research methods, hypotheses, theories, experiments, data, analysis, and conclusions. While first-person elements can be a part of the passage (for example, a scientist talking about his or her research methods), the focus is on information and research, not on personal reactions or reflections.

Students who score below 16 on the PLAN Reading Test can benefit from activities designed to help them develop critical thinking and reading skills. Some students, especially those who have greater skill and could score in the 20–23 range, are uncertain and lack confidence to respond analytically to inferential questions. What these students need is practice making inferences—understanding characterization, drawing conclusions, forming generalizations, and reaching judgments about an author's methods and goals—in both narrative and informational contexts.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A PROFICIENT READER?

Although there are many definitions of a proficient reader, within the various definitions are readily identified commonalities. One organization, the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (NWREL), conducted a study in the mid-1990s to answer the question "What do good readers know and what are they able to do?" (Dwyer & Thompson, 1999, p. 2). After reviewing state standards documents and making observations of student readers, NWREL identified six interconnected traits of an effective reader:

Reading the Lines

■ decoding conventions (conventions of texts),

■ establishing comprehension (creating meaning from written texts),

Reading Between the Lines

■ realizing content (exploring layers of meaning),

■ developing interpretations (making inferences about texts),

Reading Beyond the Lines

■ integrating for synthesis (synthesizing information to compare and extend meaning), and

■ critiquing for evaluation (evaluating the quality and effectiveness of a text) (Dwyer & Thompson, 1999, pp. 3–4).

According to Kevin Dwyer and Leslie Thompson, authors of *The Journey of a Reader in the Classroom,* "the traits identify the six critical reading skills necessary to develop readers who can process knowledge from print material, make meaning of it, and apply this meaning to other situations" (1999, p. 2).

The skills in the first two categories, Reading the Lines and Reading Between the Lines, are measured either directly or indirectly by the PLAN Reading Test. Some of the skills in the third category, Reading Beyond the Lines, are measured by the PLAN Reading Test, such as identifying how parts of the text work together, and thinking metaphorically. However, it's important to note that the passages in the Reading Test are self-contained, which means that the questions corresponding to each passage can be answered using only the text provided; prior knowledge of the topic is not required to answer the test questions.

HOW CAN STUDENTS BETTER NEGOTIATE LITERARY NARRATIVES AND INFORMATIONAL TEXTS?

How a text is organized can affect a reader's understanding of the text. So, readers need to be aware of the qualities or characteristics of literary narratives (e.g., short stories and novels) and informational texts (e.g., nonfiction essays and articles). Since there are always exceptions to the rule, the textual characteristics outlined below should be considered generalizations that may not apply to all passages.

Informational texts can be challenging for readers to comprehend because of their **organizational structure,** abstract or technical **vocabulary,** complicated **sentence structure, paragraph structure, density of information,** and **lack of imagery.** In addition, informational texts are typically not linked to readers' life experiences. Therefore, teachers need to find ways to build upon students' background knowledge *before* a text is read so that the students will better understand the information and ideas to be learned. Students need time to think about what they know about a topic or concept, to make connections between their experiences and the new information presented in a text, and to reevaluate their thinking and understanding in terms of what has been learned. This is equally true for reading and interpreting complex literary narratives.

Generally speaking, the organization of ideas in texts does not follow a standardized structure or pattern. In fact, texts typically use more than one type of **organizational structure** and may blend structures together within a paragraph. Following is a list of the most common ways in which an author can organize his or her ideas within a text (Piccolo, 1987):

■ *Description:* The author provides a mental picture and at times conveys his or her mood or tone about the topic.

■ *Sequence:* The author presents information in a sequential order.

■ *Enumeration:* The author provides a compilation of the main ideas, sometimes in list form.

■ *Cause-effect:* The author identifies relationships among the ideas or facts presented.

- *Problem-solution:* The author presents a problem or two, provides evidence, and presents possible solutions.

- *Comparison-contrast:* The author identifies the similarities and differences about a specific topic or concept.

For example, informational texts, and narrative texts as well, require readers to be aware of language that communicates or gives cues related to the organization of ideas. For instance, words or phrases such as *but, on the other hand,* or *however* (comparison-contrast) and *by, consequently,* or *because* (cause-effect) signal relationships among the ideas presented in a text. Students can learn to use these signal words to help them understand a passage. Research has shown that readers more readily recognize and understand these types of organizational structures when they have used them in their own personal writing (McGee & Richgels, 1985; Piccolo, 1987; May, 1990). So, students whose Reading score is below 16 should be encouraged to write in a variety of forms on a daily basis, experimenting with varying combinations of organizational structures.

Texts frequently include technical terms, slang, or specialized **vocabulary.** These words may be abstract or unfamiliar and may represent ideas or concepts that can only be made real to students by illustrating situations in which the word would apply. Therefore, students' attention needs to be focused on key words *before* they read. This can be done by role-playing, discussions, visual tools (webs, maps, organizers), etc. Students can be helped to develop a repertoire of strategies for determining and remembering the meanings of unfamiliar words or phrases.

Texts students will be expected to read in high school and in college tend to contain challenging **sentence structures** and constructions that are not typically used in students' writing or heard in everyday conversation. One way students can become more aware of complex sentence structures is to start with a kernel of an idea, a simple sentence such as "Dogs drool." Then students could continue to add to the sentence (adjectives, adverbs, clauses, etc.), determining how each addition or modification expands or alters the meaning and clarity of the sentence. For instance, students might add adjectives to the sentence, "*Big yellow* dogs drool," as well as adverbs "Big yellow dogs drool *tacitly* and *constantly.*"

In addition, the students could try different clauses such as "*Because* big yellow dogs drool tacitly and constantly, *they need to stay outside.*" or "*If you had* big yellow dogs *that* drool tacitly and constantly *on the carpet, you would most likely be spending your day cleaning up their messes.*"

Another challenge is the way in which **paragraphs are structured** in sophisticated texts. Texts do not always contain topic sentences or introductory statements at the beginning of each paragraph. There is not always coherence among the sentences in a paragraph nor do all paragraphs state the main idea(s) explicitly. Therefore, students need to learn strategies that will help them determine what is important and to look for evidence that supports or contradicts their assumptions. As a result, students must be flexible as they read. They must consider the relationships between and among sentences, determine how the ideas presented fit together as a whole, try various reading strategies to comprehend the text (e.g., rereading, asking questions, changing rate of reading), rethink their assumptions and viewpoints, and wait to make a final decision about the meaning of the text.

Students need to read carefully when text is **dense,** composed of abstract concepts and myriad details and facts that are interrelated to the main idea(s) of the passage. Students also need time to determine "the picture" the author is trying to convey. With informational texts, teachers can emphasize special features such as section headings, illustrations, tables, charts, graphs, maps, and diagrams to help students develop a better understanding (**visualize an image**) of specific ideas or key points to be learned. With narratives, teachers can engage students in discussions that relate plot and character to the students' own experiences, creating opportunities for understanding and stimulating students to read more.

The type of material, the reader's interest in the material, together with the purpose for reading, influence how a reader will approach a text. Typically, the purposes of informational writing are to explain facts or concepts, tell the reader about new ideas, or persuade the reader to rethink or change his or her viewpoint. Students need to be given guidance when reading in order to determine whether they must concentrate on important details, broad ideas, or both. But motivating students—getting them enthusiastic about learning—is the key.

The kinds and combinations of skills students need in order to read a narrative passage are often similar to the ones they need in order to read and understand an expository passage. The distinctions between these two types of skills are related to the degree to which the skills are applied. Indeed, the characteristics of narrative and expository texts often lead to specific types of questions. Informational texts tend to include a sizable amount of data and facts, and test questions developed for these types of texts typically probe for understanding of important facts and concepts. So a teacher can find out what interests students, what the students already know a good deal about, and play to those strengths—such as by finding more challenging readings on the same or similar subjects and having the class discuss them. A similar strategy can bring students along in their appreciation and understanding of narratives.

What Are Some Strategies for Helping Students Read Effectively?

Reading is a recursive process, one in which students make meaning by becoming actively involved as they read—noting facts and ideas and determining how that information is related; making and verifying predictions when reading; and reassessing their understanding as they gain new knowledge, information, and insights.

Students should be actively engaged when reading, involved in a variety of activities that will build their understanding of a text before, during, and after reading. Prereading strategies help students to access and build upon their prior knowledge, preparing them to read. During-reading strategies build students' conceptual understanding of a text, developing their fluency and comprehension. Postreading strategies encourage students to synthesize and summarize the information read and to extend the reading experience (Guillaume, 1998, p. 483).

The strategies on this page could be used before, during, and after reading a text. These strategies could help students develop literal-comprehension and reasoning skills similar to those listed in Table 1 (pages 8–13) in this guide.

Prereading strategies:

Previewing the Text. Students could preview a text, noting the title, authors' names, and date of the publication. In addition, the students and their teacher could scan the passage, noting topics introduced and the organizational structure(s) used in the passage. Students could also search for words and phrases that are italicized as well as those that stand out as intriguing or unfamiliar.

Asking Questions. Students could generate a list of questions based on their preview of the passage. Students could revisit their list of questions after reading the passage, identifying which questions are and are not sufficiently answered by information in the text.

During-reading strategies:

Asking Metacognitive Questions. The teacher could help his or her students develop metacognitive skills—to know when they do and do not understand a text—developing a range of strategies to help them better comprehend a text. Students could be reminded to ask and answer three questions as they read the passage: What strategies am I using to help myself understand the text? Why did I select those particular strategies? How well did the strategies help me, if at all? Students could share the strategies they used, evaluating the effectiveness of each strategy in terms of building their understanding of the text.

Being Alert to Imagery. Students could reread a text, searching for phrases or sentences that provide sensory details—details that help them to see, hear, or feel what the author is trying to say. Students could also identify parts of the text that were confusing to them, perhaps working with a group of peers to come up with analogies that would help them visualize the ideas or concepts being discussed in the text.

Postreading strategies:

Synthesizing. Students could take the information or skills they have learned and apply it to a new situation.

Making Connections. Students could compare information stated in a passage to what is stated in a textbook or other source. Students could be encouraged to recognize and determine similarities (consistencies and agreements) and differences (inconsistencies and contradictions) between the texts.

WHAT KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ARE LOW-SCORING STUDENTS READY TO LEARN?

For students who score below 16 on the PLAN Reading Test, their target achievement outcomes could be the College Readiness Standards listed in the 16–19 range:

■ Identify a clear main idea or purpose of straightforward paragraphs in uncomplicated literary narratives

■ Locate simple details at the sentence and paragraph level in uncomplicated passages

■ Recognize a clear function of a part of an uncomplicated passage

■ Identify relationships between main characters in uncomplicated literary narratives

■ Recognize clear cause-effect relationships within a single paragraph in uncomplicated literary narratives

■ Use context to understand basic figurative language

■ Draw simple generalizations and conclusions about people, ideas, and so on in uncomplicated passages

By no means should these be seen as limiting or exclusive goals. As stated earlier, it is important to use multiple sources of information to make instructional decisions. And individual students learn at different rates and in different sequences. What's important is to get students reading—and writing.

WHAT STRATEGIES/MATERIALS CAN TEACHERS USE IN THEIR CLASSROOMS?

According to Bryan Goodwin, senior program associate at the Mid-continent Research Education Laboratory (McREL), "it is important to note that improving the performance of disenfranchised students does not mean ignoring other students. Indeed, many of the changes advocated—such as making curricula more rigorous and creating smaller school units—will benefit all students" (Goodwin, 2000, p. 6). Means and Knapp (1991) express a similar view:

> A fundamental assumption underlying much of the curriculum in America's schools is that certain skills are "basic" and must be mastered before students receive instruction on more "advanced" skills, such as reading comprehension, written composition, and mathematical reasoning. . . . Research from cognitive science questions this assumption and leads to a quite different view of children's learning and appropriate instruction. By discarding assumptions about skill hierarchies and attempting to understand children's competencies as constructed and evolving both inside and outside of school, researchers are developing models of intervention that start with what children know and provide access to explicit models of thinking in areas that traditionally have been termed "advanced" or "higher order." (p. 1)

Pages 40–50 exemplify the kind of teacher-developed activity that could be used in a classroom for all students, not just those who have scored low on a standardized assessment like PLAN. This activity helps students to develop their inferential skills by encouraging them to make supportable interpretations. Students use various materials, such as illustrations, scripts, and short stories, to develop their interpretive skills. The activity provides both embedded and summative assessments to evaluate student learning.

How Is the Activity Organized?

A template for the instructional activity appears on page 41. Since the instructional activity has multiple components, an explanation of each is provided below.

A The primary *Reading Strands* are displayed across the top of the page.

B The *Guiding Principles* section consists of one or more statements about instruction, assessment, thinking skills, student learning, and other educationally relevant topics.

C The *Title* and *Subject Area(s)/Course(s)* information allows you to determine at a glance the primary focus of the activity and whether it might meet the needs of your student population.

D The *Purpose* statement describes knowledge and skills students may have difficulty with and what will be done in the activity to help them acquire that knowledge and skills.

E The *Overview* section provides a brief description of how the knowledge and skills listed in the purpose statement will be taught and suggests an estimated time frame for the entire activity.

F The *Links to College Readiness Standards* section indicates the primary knowledge and skills the activity will focus on. These statements are tied directly to the strands listed at the top of the page.

G The next section, *Description of the Instructional Activity,* is divided into three interrelated parts: Materials/Resources, Introduction, and Suggested Teaching Strategies/Procedures. The section provides suggestions for engaging students in the activity, and gives related topics and tasks. The activity addresses a range of objectives and modes of instruction, but it emphasizes providing students with experiences that focus on reasoning and making connections, use community resources and real-life learning techniques, and encourage students to ask questions—questions leading to analysis, reflection, and further study and to individual construction of meanings and interpretations.

H Valuable *Comments/Tips from Classroom Teachers* are provided for the activity. As the title indicates, this text box includes ideas from current classroom teachers.

I The *Suggestions for Assessment* section offers ideas for documenting and recording student learning. This section describes two types of assessments: Embedded Assessments and Summative Assessments. Embedded Assessments are assessments that inform you as to where your students currently are in the learning process (a formative assessment that is primarily teacher developed and is integral to the instructional process—at times the instruction and assessment are indistinguishable). The second type of assessment is a Summative Assessment (a final assessment of students' learning), which provides a description of the knowledge and skills students are to have mastered by the end of the activity and the criteria by which they will be assessed.

J The *Links to Ideas for Progress* section provides statements that suggest learning experiences (knowledge and skills to be developed) that are connected to the Suggested Strategies/Activities.

K The *Suggested Strategies/Activities* section provides a brief description of ways to reteach the skills or content previously taught or to extend students' learning.

The teacher-developed activity that follows provides suggestions, not prescriptions. You are the best judge of what is necessary and relevant for your students. Therefore, we encourage you to review the activity, modifying and using those suggestions that apply, and disregarding those that are not appropriate for your students. As you select, modify, and revise the activity, you can be guided by the statements that appear in the Guiding Principles box at the beginning of the activity.

Linking Instruction and Assessment
Strand(s): **A**

Guiding Principles

■

B

■

■

TITLE **C**

Subject Area(s)/Course(s)

Purpose **D**

Overview **E**

Links to College Readiness Standards

■

F

■

■

Description of the Instructional Activity

Materials/Resources

■

G

■

■

Introduction—

Suggested Teaching Strategies/Procedures—

Comments/Tips from Classroom Teachers:

H

Suggestions for Assessment **I**

Embedded Assessment (name of assessment)—

Embedded Assessment (name of assessment)—

Summative Assessment (name of assessment)—

ENHANCING STUDENT LEARNING

Links to Ideas for Progress **J**

■

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Suggested Strategies/Activities **K**

Guiding Principles

- "'Tilling' strategies prepare students to more fully comprehend the unique features of an individual text that they are about to read. . . . Students must learn how to prepare their minds (as farmers first prepare the soil) before authors' ideas can blossom and bear the fruits of meaning, reflection, and productive translations into students' lives. Tilling the text expands students' use of content, authorial, and textual clues as they appear in individual and representative texts." (Block, 1999, pp. 105, 109)

CONNECTING WORDS AND THE WORLD

Reading/Literature for Tenth Graders

Purpose

Synthesizing information and making reasonable interpretations can be difficult for students. This activity can develop students' understanding of characterization and provide practice in connecting key pieces of information (visual and/or written details) to reach interpretations. Students will develop their interpretive skills by making reasonable conclusions and generalizations.

Overview

The students will complete a series of activities over a two-week period (ten 45-minute class periods) that will help them develop their interpretive skills using illustrations and texts. They will synthesize information, analyzing the characters and the relationships among them. They will also work on formulating reasonable conclusions and generalizations about characters.

Links to College Readiness Standards

- Locate important details in uncomplicated passages

- Identify relationships between main characters in uncomplicated literary narratives

- Draw simple generalizations and conclusions about people, ideas, and so on in uncomplicated passages

Description of the Instructional Activity

Materials/Resources

- A transparency of a black-and-white illustration (e.g., a cartoon, photograph, advertisement, or drawing) or a video clip

- Overhead projector or VCR/DVD player

- Observation Sheet (p. 46)

- Dialogue Script Worksheet (p. 47)

- Collection of short stories (see suggestions on p. 45)

- Pencil and paper

- Self-adhesive notes (optional)

- Biopoem Outline (p. 48)

- Optional Assessments:
    - ✓ Teacher-Student Conference Notes (p. 49)
    - ✓ Biopoem Scoring Rubric (p. 50)

Introduction—Begin the activity by writing the phrase "reading the word and the world" (Freire & Macedo, 1987) on the board. Ask students to share their thoughts about the meaning of the phrase. Then clarify or explain the phrase, emphasizing, for example, the importance of learning how to accurately read and interpret words in texts; people's facial expressions, movements, or tone of voice; or symbolism in signs or artwork. You could ask student volunteers to share a personal anecdote about a time

when they incorrectly interpreted a person's expression or movements, or have students role-play specific situations or events to see if their peers could accurately interpret the emotions of the character(s). Continue the discussion during the next class period, explaining that interpretation requires several key skills:

■ identify significant details;

■ synthesize information;

■ identify relationships; and

■ make reasonable conclusions or generalizations.

Help students practice these skills by "reading" an illustration (e.g., a cartoon, photograph, advertise-ment, or drawing) without its accompanying text or a clip from a silent picture. An alternative would be to have students bring in and/or choose what they would like to read and interpret as a class. Have students use the Observation Sheet on page 46 to record what they see (explicit details) and what they cannot see (implicit information). Ask students to share their observations with the class, using their comments to introduce or review several literary terms: *characterization, setting, plot,* and *conflict.*

Comments/Tips from Classroom Teachers:

A unit packet would help facilitate the teaching and assessing of this unit. Students would complete and maintain their own packet, which could be kept in a file folder in a box in the classroom. Each phase of the lesson would have some kind of form to record students' successful completion.

Pair up students at the next class period. Provide assistance to students as they formulate preliminary interpretations about the character(s) and scene in the illustration or video clip. Students' interpretations should be plausible and supported by the images. Allow time for students to query the interpretations of other student pairs, such as "How do you know the man is fighting for his life?" "What makes you think this man is middle-aged?" "Which details verify that the incident is happening in the man's own home?" Members of each pair should record the interpretations, understanding that they will be revisiting them once additional information is given. Time permitting, provide students with the title and caption that accompanies the illustration or video

clip. For example, one of the fourteen illustrations in Chris Van Allsburg's book *The Mysteries of Harris Burrick* (1984) depicts a man and an unknown life form in a room in a house; the title and caption are: "Under the Rug"—"Two weeks passed and it happened again." After allowing time for the pairs to discuss this title and caption, ask students the following questions:

■ Based on this new information, do you need to modify your preliminary interpretations? Why or why not?

■ Does the title or caption clarify the relationship between the characters in the illustration? Why or why not?

After the discussion, have each pair of students complete the bottom portion of the Observation Sheet (i.e., record information provided, revise interpretations, if necessary, and compose final interpretation), turning it in for review. An optional question that could be asked of students is "How could you change the title and caption to convey a different mood or atmosphere (e.g., carelessness, sadness) for this particular illustration or video clip?"

Suggested Teaching Strategies/Procedures—Begin the next class period with a review of the literary terms previously discussed. Then select one pair of students' interpretation to embellish. Explain that the class period will be spent learning how to use words to create characterization. Using an overhead projector, compose, with the help of students, a short script that captures the dialogue that might have ensued between the characters in the illustration or video clip (see the Dialogue Script Worksheet on page 47). The dialogue would need to clearly convey the characters' thoughts, actions, and feelings at that point in time. Have students pair up with their previous partner and use the rest of the class period to begin work on their own script (each person takes on the role of a character). Some students may prefer to use the same illustration or video clip, while others might want to select a different one (collected by the teacher or students). Several class periods would be needed for students to write and edit the scripts and to conference with the teacher (explain how the images in the illustration support the conclusions they have formed). Each pair could read aloud their script to the class; the read-alouds could be videotaped for future classes to review.

Once students have completed their scripts they could be given a choice of short stories to read (for example, *On the Fringe,* a collection of short stories about the interplay between teens who are deemed "in" or "out," or *Thicker Than Water: Coming-of-Age Stories by Irish and Irish American Writers*). The students could use self-adhesive notes or underlining to mark parts of the text that reveal the traits, personality, or mannerisms of a particular character, including his or her relationship to others. Then the students could be asked to write responses to such questions as

■ What traits/qualities does your character possess? Provide evidence from the text.

■ What words (adjectives) would best describe your character? Explain why.

■ What does your character think of himself/herself? Provide evidence from the text.

■ How is your character viewed by others in the text? Provide evidence from the text.

■ How would you characterize the relationship between your character and the other characters from the text?

Students could use their answers to help them generate a biopoem about their particular character. Information about biopoems can be obtained from http://userwww.sfsu.edu/~earthman/655biopoem.htm. The Biopoem Outline on page 48 could be given to students to assist them in creating their poem. The Biopoem Scoring Rubric on page 50 should be provided to students before they begin writing so that they know what criteria their work will be evaluated on.

Suggestions for Assessment

Embedded Assessment (Observation Sheet)—You could review students' completed worksheets (see page 46) to see the number of details listed, the extent to which the students connected key details to develop preliminary interpretations, and the students' level of skill in making reasonable conclusions or generalizations.

Embedded Assessment (Informal Teacher Notes)—As you listen to each pair of students as they explain their script, you could record their comments using the Teacher-Student Conference Notes form on page 49. You could make note of those students who are, and are not, drawing conclusions supported by the illustration or video clip and its accompanying text.

Summative Assessment (Biopoem Scoring Rubric)—Students' biopoems could be assessed with the scoring rubric on page 50. The rubric should be given to the students before they start work on their biopoem. You could review the rubric with the class beforehand to discuss how you will use it to evaluate the students' interpretation of their character, including students' inferential thinking, use of details, and ability to follow, modify, or enhance a set organizational structure.

Enhancing Student Learning

Links to Ideas for Progress

■ Draw reasonable conclusions about people and situations using evidence presented in a text

■ Enumerate aspects or characteristics of people, objects, events, or ideas

■ Examine events in written or nonprint sources to determine the precipitating cause(s) and final outcome(s)

Suggested Strategies/Activities

Students could take a lyric poem, such as Theodore Roethke's "My Papa's Waltz," or a ballad, such as "The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe, and turn it into a short story or a Reader's Theatre script by adding details and dialogue. See http://www.poets.org/page.php/prmID/59 or http://www.favoritepoem.org/poems/index.html for online sources of poems.

Another activity would be to explain that some stories have a beginning or ending that's separate from the story itself. You could cite the "Prologue" to *The Canterbury Tales* as an example of prologue, and a movie like *American Graffiti* as an example of a work having an epilogue. You could then explain the purpose of prologues and epilogues. Using the short story read for this activity, or a new short story, students could write an essay explaining what could have happened before the story took place (a prologue) or what might happen after the story (an epilogue). Events and details from the original short story should be used by the students to make relevant points and to connect the short story to the prologue or epilogue.

Observation Sheet

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Review the illustration or video clip carefully. Use column one to record what you see (explicit details). Then, think about what you cannot see (what is implied, missing, or not known). Use column two to record your thoughts in the form of comments or questions. With the help of a partner, develop a preliminary interpretation and record it in column three. Record new information presented by the teacher in the space provided. Revise your preliminary interpretations, if necessary, providing details and examples to support your final interpretation (generalization).

What You See (e.g., characters' appearance and actions, problem/struggle, physical surroundings)	**What You Can Not See** (e.g., what is implied, missing, or not known)	**Preliminary Interpretations** (e.g., explanation of what is being implied about the character(s) and scene)

New Information (e.g., title and caption):

Final Interpretation:

Names: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Directions: With your partner, select a character from the illustration to role-play/become. Using the format below, compose a short conversation (scripted dialogue) that might have occurred between the characters at that point in time.

    Title:

    Caption:

Character #1:

Character #2:

Character #1:

Character #2:

Character #1:

Character #2:

Character #1:

Character #2:

Character #1:

Character #2:

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Use the template below to create a biopoem about your selected short story character. Write the biopoem in the space provided to the right or on another page.

Line 1:	Character's first name	
Line 2:	Character traits (List 4 adjectives that describe character's personality.)	
Line 3:	"Relative of . . ." or "Friend of . . ." (List 3 or 4 relationships character has with others.)	
Line 4:	Position or Job/Career	
Line 5:	"Lover of . . " (List 3 things, people, hobbies, or special times the character loves.)	
Line 6:	"Who felt . . ." (List 3 emotions and provide brief explanations.)	
Line 7:	"Who has been . . ." (List 3 places or events.)	
Line 8:	"Who needed . . ." (List 3 items and provide brief explanations.)	
Line 9:	"Who feared . . ." (List 3 items and provide brief explanations.)	
Line 10:	"Who gave . . ." (List 3 items and provide brief explanations.)	
Line 11:	"Who longed for . . ." (List 3 items and provide brief explanations.)	
Line 12:	"Who would have liked to have seen . . ." (List 1 item and give a full explanation.)	
Line 13:	Synonym (A nickname that best describes the character.)	
Line 14:	"Resident of . . ." (List address, if known.)	
Line 15:	Character's last name	

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Record students' thoughts based on the prompts below.

1. Tell me about the characters in your script.

2. What conclusions have you drawn about the characters and scene in the illustration or video clip?

3. Which images or text help to support your conclusions? Please explain.

4. Do you believe your script leads readers or listeners to arrive at the same conclusions? Please explain.

Summative Assessment—Biopoem Scoring Rubric

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Note the degree of evidence the student has demonstrated for each criterion.

Criteria	3 Exemplary Evidence	2 Partial Evidence	1 Little Evidence	Score/Comments
Characterization	Listed 4 distinct traits that exhibit an accurate and thorough understanding of the character	Listed 4 traits that exhibit only a partial or incomplete understanding of the character	Listed 4 or fewer traits that are imprecise and exhibit relatively little understanding of the character	
Interpretation Skills	Has drawn accurate conclusions or generalizations about the character (e.g., character's strengths, needs, feelings/emotions)	Has drawn some accurate conclusions or generalizations about the character (e.g., character's strengths, needs, feelings/emotions)	Has drawn inaccurate or unsupportable conclusions or generalizations about the character (e.g., character's strengths, needs, feelings/emotions)	
Details	Provides varied details/information; presents a clear picture/profile of the character and his or her relationship to others	Provides sufficient details/information; presents an adequate picture/profile of the character and his or her relationship to others	Provides little or inaccurate details/information; presents an incomplete or limited picture/profile of the character and his or her relationship to others	
Organization	Modifies or enhances structure of poem (improves existing structure or includes additional lines and information)	Follows structure of poem as given (includes all 15 lines and information)	Does not follow structure of poem or orders information illogically (excludes 4 or more lines and important information)	
Writing Conventions	Shows evidence of a careful review; no errors exist	Shows evidence of some careful review; two or three errors exist	Shows little evidence of review; four or more errors exist	

Total Score [_____]

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR PLAN READING

WHY ARE ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDED?

The set of instructional activities that begins on page 52 was developed to illustrate the link between classroom-based activities and the skills and understandings embedded in the PLAN Reading Test questions. The activities are provided as examples of how classroom instruction and assessment, linked with an emphasis on reasoning, can help students practice skills and understandings they will need in the classroom and in their lives beyond the classroom. It is these skills and understandings that are represented on the PLAN Reading Test.

A variety of thought-provoking activities, such as small- and large-group discussions, analyses of materials read, and both independent and collaborative activities, are included to help students develop and refine their skills in many types of situations.

The instructional activities that follow have a similar organizational structure as the one in the previous section. *Like the other activity, these activities were not developed to be a ready-to-use set of instructional strategies.* ACT's main purpose is to illustrate how the skills and understandings embedded in the PLAN Reading Test questions can be incorporated into classroom activities.

For the purpose of this part of the guide, we have tried to paint a picture of the ways in which the activities could work in the classroom. We left room for you to envision how the activities might best work for you and your students. We recognize that as you determine how best to serve your students, you take into consideration your teaching style as well as the academic needs of your students; state, district, and school standards; and available curricular materials.

The instructional activities are not intended to drill students in skills measured by the PLAN Reading Test. It is never desirable for test scores or test content to become the sole focus of classroom instruction. However, considered with information from a variety of other sources, the results of standardized tests can help you identify areas of strength and weakness. The activities that follow are examples of sound educational practices and imaginative, integrated learning experiences. As part of a carefully designed instructional program, these activities may result in improved performance on the PLAN Reading Test—not because they show how to drill students in specific, isolated skills but because they encourage thinking and integrated learning. These activities can help because they encourage the kind of thinking processes and strategies the PLAN Reading Test requires.

Guiding Principles

■ "Misreading is often not misreading at all, but mispredicting, and that's a normal part of the fluent reading process." (Kutz & Roskelly, 1991, p. 199)

■ "Mindfulness grow[s] out of the capacity to judge and refine one's work and efforts before, during, and after one has attempted to accomplish them: precisely the goal of reflection." (Carroll & Carini, 1991, p. 55)

■ "Assessment tasks communicate to students the kind of intellectual work that is valued." (Newmann, Secada, & Wehlage, 1995, p. 14)

DEVELOPING METACOGNITIVE SKILLS

College Readiness Standards

■ Draw simple generalizations and conclusions using details that support the main points of more challenging passages

■ Summarize basic events and ideas in more challenging passages

Description of the Instructional Activity

Students could actively listen as the teacher reads aloud an article or poem the teacher finds personally challenging. While reading aloud, the teacher could model how a reader can work through the text, commenting on what is being read, what is and isn't making sense, and what needs to be clarified by further reading. The teacher could also emphasize which strategies are being used before, during, and after reading (e.g., setting a purpose, making predictions, connecting ideas found in the text), explaining why each was selected and how effective each was. After the read-aloud, students could help the teacher identify key pieces of information explicitly stated in the text and what the author implied or did not address at all.

Next, the teacher could present challenging materials that reflect the class's interests (e.g., consumer reports, technical materials, news articles). Students could select one text to read independently, responding in writing to such prompts as:

■ What strategies are you using to help you understand the material (before you read, while you read, after you read)?

■ Why did you select those particular strategies?

■ How well did the strategies help you?

■ List key pieces of information from your text.

■ Why are these ideas central to the meaning of the text?

■ What conclusions can be reasonably drawn from the text?

■ Write a brief summary of the text.

Based on their text selection, students could divide into small groups to discuss and work with their summaries. For example, they could create a "cut-and-paste" summary—ideas (sentences) taken from each member's summary and reorganized on a new piece of paper. Students could also share reading strategies, discussing when and why a strategy was used and how successful it was. Each group could compile a list of strategies used by its members.

Each group could share its summary (highlighting unanswered questions and new insights about the meaning of the text) and list of reading strategies (posting a compiled list in the classroom).

Suggestions for Assessment

Checklist—A checklist could be used by students to evaluate their discussion group's participation and collaboration skills.

Rating Scale—A scale of 1–4 could be used to evaluate students' collaborative and interpretive skills as they develop a study guide for reading material assigned in another class. Students could work with partners to determine how best to complete the task (e.g., dividing up responsibilities and organizing the information for the guide), making use of and incorporating into the guide some of the reading strategies learned previously. The study guides could be placed in the school library for students' use.

Ideas for Progress

■ Develop a reasonable interpretation of the central theme(s) or main point(s) of a challenging text

■ Determine which details in a text are essential to understanding the author's or narrator's intended message

■ Analyze the relationship between an author's or narrator's intended message and the rhetorical devices used to convey that message (e.g., language used, evidence provided)

Suggested Strategies/Activities

Students could evaluate how well the reading strategies posted in the classroom work in a different context, such as reading a technical manual, and then rethink and revise their strategies list as needed. As they read, students could practice identifying the main ideas, presenting key points of their text using various formats. For example, students could create an acrostic poem (a short verse form in which the first letters of each line, taken in order, spell a word or phrase) that represents significant ideas of a technical text. Or, students might choose to find pictures that reflect key ideas from the technical text, placing each picture within a specific letter of the manual's title (e.g., each letter of the manual's title would need to be drawn quite large and wide so that a picture would easily fit within the inside space of the letter). Students might also participate in an "Ask the Expert" session, where class members pose questions/problems to a panel of experts (several students) about ideas presented in the technical manual. The panel could answer students' questions by directing the students to relevant sections of the manual and restating the information using more accessible language.

MAPPING YOUR WAY TO MEANING

College Readiness Standards

■ Summarize events and ideas in virtually any passage

■ Discern which details, though they may appear in different sections throughout a passage, support important points in more challenging passages

■ Identify clear relationships between characters, ideas, and so on in more challenging literary narratives

Description of the Instructional Activity

Students could be shown examples of various text structures (e.g., definition, description, problem/solution, cause-effect, thesis-example) and then asked about their understanding of and skill with each. The teacher could then focus on a text structure that is unfamiliar to the students. The students could be given a *graphic organizer* (a visual representation of complex or interrelated ideas) illustrating the selected text structure, such as a fishbone diagram.

This type of diagram provides a systematic way of looking at a problem (the fish's head) and determining the causes (the fish's spine and major bones) that create or contribute to the effect. Next, the teacher could explain the process that was used to complete and redesign the organizer—decisions and changes that were made to it as a text was read. Class members could create a written summary using information from the organizer. The class could compare their summary to the original text, assessing their ability to identify main ideas and supporting details and to use clear, precise words or phrases to signal specific relationships among ideas. Students could respond to the questions that follow, comparing answers with a neighbor before participating in a whole-class discussion:

■ Does the organizer help to clarify the meaning of the text as a whole? Why? Why not?

■ Are the most important points of the text included in the organizer? If not, what's missing?

■ Does the organizer clearly illustrate different kinds of relationships or ways ideas are connected? If not, how would you change the organizer to make it clearer?

■ What patterns or features seem to be characteristic of this text structure?

Students could then move into small groups, each group working with a text that is representative of a given text structure. Students could read the text closely, noting features that signal relationships among ideas. The group could create a graphic organizer, developing its own or adapting one provided by the teacher. The group could use its list of text features to help them write a summary of the text.

Next, students could form *jigsaw groups,* in which each student in the group is an expert on a different text structure. Each student could explain to the others the process used to develop the organizer and describe the features that are characteristic of his or her text structure. A booklet displaying students' work could be created and used as a resource during writing.

Linking Instruction and Assessment
Strands: *Main Ideas and Author's Approach; Supporting Details; Sequential, Comparative, and Cause-Effect Relationships*

Suggestions for Assessment

Questionnaire—Students could develop a questionnaire that will help them reflect on the organizational structure(s) used in their own writing.

Performance Assessment—Students could be encouraged to experiment with a text, rewriting it using a different genre and text structure.

Ideas for Progress

- Search for patterns or clues (e.g., signal words) that indicate cause-effect relationships

- Identify details that clearly support the key point(s) of written or nonprint sources

- Identify the author's or narrator's reasons for including specific information in the text

Suggested Strategies/Activities

Students could be encouraged to review materials found at home or elsewhere (e.g., TV listings/reviews, operating manuals, brochures) that illustrate different text structures. Next, the students could use a variety of strategies for determining the main idea(s) and supporting details of their text, such as generating predictions about what information the text might include; identifying language that signals relationships among ideas; and locating titles, subheadings, and graphical cues (e.g., underlining, boldface type, italics).

EXPLORING RELATIONSHIPS AMONG EVENTS

College Readiness Standards

■ Order sequences of events in more challenging passages

■ Understand the dynamics between people, ideas, and so on in more challenging passages

■ Understand implied or subtly stated cause-effect relationships in more challenging passages

Description of the Instructional Activity

Students could divide into small groups with each group being given a different scenario (e.g., an unusual day at school, a person's first driving experience, a new job) and list of characters (e.g., student, teacher, parent, friend). While some of the students in each group act out their given scenario, the others could write down the sequence of events and determine which events caused others to occur. The observers could also note the dynamics between the characters being role-played, examining how each character's actions or words impacted the behavior or attitude of the others. The students could

then switch roles as actors and observers. The next reenactment of the scenario should be played from a different stance or perspective (e.g., a person's first driving experience could be wonderful or horrific or a combination of both as viewed by the driver, driver's education teacher or parent, a pedestrian, or other drivers on the road).

Students could also read different accounts of a current or historical event, discussing similarities and differences between and among the accounts. Students could discuss factors that would cause discrepancies in people's interpretation and the effects of each version on their understanding of the event.

Students could then work with a different medium—music, for example—and search for song lyrics that convey a chain of events (e.g., country-western songs, rap songs). Students could analyze the cause-effect relationships between events, answering such questions as:

■ What is the sequence of events?

■ What happened as a result of these events?

■ If there were multiple causes leading to the end result, which cause do you think is the most important and why?

■ Which events seemed to have a direct impact on other events? Why?

■ What would be the effect if the sequence of events changed or if one of the events had not occurred?

Next, students could be offered a choice of literary works like Olsen's "Tell Me a Riddle" or Erdrich's "Eleanor's Tale: The Leap" that employ complex sequences (e.g., flashback or flash-forward, stream of consciousness, or dream sequence). Students could compare the texts, discussing the author's use of sequence and determining the relationship of the literary work's theme(s) to sequences of events described in the text.

Suggestions for Assessment

Rating Scale—A quantitative rating scale could be used to score students' answers to the questions posed about the song lyrics.

Multiple-Choice Questions—Students could answer questions that focus on sequence and cause-effect relationships in their literary text, producing a written analysis for each question that includes a justification for the selected response and a separate argument for each answer choice that is rejected. Students could exchange papers with a peer who selected the same text and review his or her written analyses. Students could provide written feedback about the clarity and depth of their peers' reasoning as well as meet to discuss any unresolved questions. Students could review the comments, rethinking and revising their analyses as needed.

Ideas for Progress

■ Map sequences of events in texts or films or from everyday occurrences, defending their reasoning

■ Use various strategies (e.g., questioning, role-playing) to determine plausible cause-effect relationships

■ Examine events in written or nonprint sources to determine the precipitating cause(s) and final outcome(s)

Suggested Strategies/Activities

Students could create a scrapbook of memorable events (e.g., personal, local, or national) that occurred during the school year. The scrapbook could include photographs, mementos, newspaper clippings, etc. that depict people, places, or things that have had an impact on the students' lives. Students could place the events in different orders (flashback, flash-forward) and study their causes and effects. Students could discuss the selected events with their peers, discussing cause and effect relationships. Students could annotate the scrapbook, providing a context for each event included—a description of each, the significance of each event to the students, the occurrences that preceded and followed each event, and the range of thoughts and emotions students associate with each event.

Guiding Principles

■ "Readers bring to . . . reading, as they do to every activity, the accumulated knowledge and experiences of their lives." (Kutz & Roskelly, 1991, p. 189)

■ "Wise *understanding* tends to consist of the ability to see and affirm the truth of contrary *points* of view. . . ." (Elbow, 1986, p. 141)

■ "Sound assessment at all levels (classroom, boardroom, legislature) is critical to student well-being and to effective schools." (Stiggins, 1994, p. 56)

EXAMINING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

College Readiness Standards

■ Discern which details, though they may appear in different sections throughout a passage, support important points in more challenging passages

■ Understand the dynamics between people, ideas, and so on in more challenging passages

■ Understand the overall approach taken by an author or narrator (e.g., point of view, kinds of evidence used) in virtually any passage

Description of the Instructional Activity

Students could share their thoughts about a topic of interest (e.g., increasing the age to obtain a driver's license) and then categorize the information presented as fact, opinion, or reasoned judgment. The teacher could provide students with two articles that have opposing viewpoints on the selected topic. Students could be assigned a specific text to read first, switching to the other text when ready. Students could read and analyze each text with a partner, using their reading log to record facts and details that support the author's point of view and to share experiences they have had that may affect their interpretation of each article.

After reading both texts, students could come together as a class to share their thoughts. They could use a Venn diagram or Devine's H-map (described in Hadaway & Young, 1994) to compare the texts. The left- and right-hand sides of each graphical representation provide space to identify differences between concepts while the center space is used to note similarities. After completing this task, students may wonder whom to believe, so they could discuss how to determine the accuracy of information and the credibility of an author. Students could generate a list of strategies such as:

■ Conduct research on the sources of information presented in a text.

■ Check information against what other experts have to say.

■ Discover whether the author has something to gain or lose by expressing a particular viewpoint.

■ Consider the author's expertise or experience.

Next, students could describe the images and feelings they associate with the words *purpose* and *motive.* After reaching a consensus on the meaning of each word, students could contemplate each author's purpose(s) and motive(s) for writing his or her article.

Suggestions for Assessment

Reading Log Checklist—Structured prompts could be given throughout the activity to help students clarify and extend their thinking:

- Describe each author's point of view, providing evidence from the text that supports the author's viewpoint.

- List any inconsistencies or points of agreement found between the texts and note any contradictory statements within a text.

- Evaluate the credibility of each author, considering what is known about the author's expertise and experience and the reliability of the evidence presented.

- Identify each author's purpose for writing his or her article and the response desired from readers.

- Describe each author's use of strategies (logic, word choice, organization of text, propaganda techniques) to accomplish his or her purpose.

- Describe your own interests, attitudes, or concerns about this topic.

- Express your own viewpoint, explaining how and why it has changed or remained the same after reading the articles.

- List some additional factors that might have an impact on a person's viewpoint.

A checklist could be used to evaluate students' entries in their reading logs, the criteria being generated by the teacher and/or the students.

Ideas for Progress

- Evaluate the extent to which comparisons made by the author or narrator help clarify specific textual relationships

- Confirm or disprove generalizations suggested in texts by providing examples or counterexamples from other sources

- Analyze the relationship between an author's or narrator's intended message and the rhetorical devices used to convey that message (e.g., language used, evidence provided)

Suggested Strategies/Activities

Students could be encouraged to conduct additional research on the issue previously discussed in class. After sharing and examining new information found, students could write editorials for the local paper, expressing their opinions about the issue, critically analyzing assertions made by experts about it, and anticipating and responding to possible criticisms of their views. Students could develop leaflets, slogans, etc., determining the best approach for presenting valid arguments either for or against the issue. Students could also become actively involved in a community organization to extend their participation in and understanding of the issue.

Guiding Principles

■ "A better way to help students learn new words . . . is to find real contexts in what students are reading and writing and discussing in class. Students will learn the meaning [of words] if they have reason to, and a good reason is that the word expresses a quality they want to describe." (Kutz & Roskelly, 1991, p. 203)

■ "Readers pay attention to text as only one element in producing meaning; they draw as well on associations, feelings, images, and ideas evoked by the text's words." (*The reader, the text, the poem* by L. Rosenblatt, as cited in Kutz & Roskelly, 1991, p. 210)

■ "Good assessment reliably measures something beyond the specific tasks that students are asked to complete. The results of good assessment identify what students can do in a broad knowledge or skill domain." (Herman, Aschbacher, & Winters, 1992, p. 9)

INVESTIGATING LANGUAGE

College Readiness Standards

■ Understand the implication of a familiar word or phrase and of simple descriptive language

■ Use context to understand basic figurative language

■ Determine the appropriate meaning of words, phrases, or statements from figurative or somewhat technical contexts

Description of the Instructional Activity

Students could be encouraged to listen carefully to radio broadcasts, conversations among their peers or family members, children's television programs, and other contexts in order to note slang expressions, figurative language, jargon, or familiar words used in an unfamiliar way. Students could discuss the words and their meanings, describing when each word was used and for what purposes, and considering other language that may be more precise. Students could be asked to think about some of these words from the perspective of a parent, politician, or businessperson, predicting if and how the meaning of a word would change. Students could be encouraged to correspond with friends or relatives who live in a different geographic region to learn their thoughts about the meaning(s) and use(s) of a particular word.

Next, the teacher could provide students with copies of magazine or newspaper articles from different eras. Students could make a selection, then tag words or phrases that are unfamiliar or intriguing, such as *funny paper, fusspot, goon* (1920s); *heebie-jeebies, gasser* (1940s); and *far-out, greenway* (1960s). Students could share their words in small groups, addressing the following:

■ Explain why you selected each word or phrase.

■ Indicate strategies you used to clarify the meaning of each word or phrase.

■ Describe the importance of each word to the text.

■ Comment on the meaning of the word, then and now.

■ Connect each word to a personal experience, if possible.

Each group could be asked to classify its words, determining the criteria (e.g., parts of speech, familiarity of words, time period) and format (e.g., chart, table, diagram) to use. Each group could present its classification system to the class, explaining why specific categories were chosen, what difficulties members had or still have in categorizing some words, and how other words would be more precise.

The teacher could collect all the words and have the students reclassify them using literary categories such as figures of speech (e.g., simile, oxymoron, metaphor), coined words (e.g., *smoke* and *fog* have been blended to make the word *smog*), sound devices (e.g., alliteration, assonance, rhythm), and ameliorative and pejorative words (e.g., words whose meanings in society have changed, either positively or negatively, over time).

Suggestions for Assessment

Anecdotal Notes—The teacher might make informal notes that describe students' use of thinking skills such as making predictions, solving problems, and analyzing words. Students could also make informal notes for the teacher about how effective the activity was in developing a better understanding of the words.

Rating Scale—A qualitative rating scale could be used to assess the participation and collaboration of the groups' members.

Ideas for Progress

■ Draw reasonable conclusions about people and situations using evidence presented in a text

■ Research words and phrases from different sources, identifying their shades of meaning in various contexts or situations

■ Analyze figurative and technical language in the media, relating some instances to a personal experience

Suggested Strategies/Activities

Students could develop a top-10 list in which they provide ten reasons why people should be encouraged to use clear and precise language. Students could be encouraged to find information that would support their top-10 list, such as conducting interviews with people at school or in their neighborhood to obtain their thoughts about the need for using clear, precise language. Students could also become "language detectives" looking for newspaper headlines, advertisements, or signs that contain ambiguous language. Students could also be encouraged to talk with friends, parents/guardians, or others about language, searching for favorite stories about first spoken words, words or phrases used in unusual ways, or idiomatic phrases/expressions that were interpreted literally at an early age (e.g., Adult combing her hair: "Ouch, I have a big rat in my hair." Child: "Did it bite you?"). Students could record the stories, checking with their source to make sure the story has been accurately retold. The stories could be bound together and copies made for each student's parent(s)/guardians and/or friends.

Guiding Principles

■ "Not only must readers be active and working hard at constructing meanings, but they must also make choices, guess at possibilities, ask and answer questions as they proceed." (Kutz & Roskelly, 1991, pp. 190–191)

■ "Classroom environment can promote critical thinking by being highly active and interactive." (Meyer, 1986, p. 9)

■ "Testing and assessment for the purposes of improving teaching and learning within schools . . . need to be coordinated with external testing programs aimed at school accountability." (Haney, 1991, p. 156)

READING BEYOND THE LINES

College Readiness Standards

■ Understand the overall approach taken by an author or narrator (e.g., point of view, kinds of evidence used) in more challenging passages

■ Draw simple generalizations and conclusions using details that support the main points of more challenging passages

■ Use information from one or more sections of a more challenging passage to make generalizations and conclusions about people, ideas, and so on

Description of the Instructional Activity

Students could watch scenes from a video, listen to portions of an old radio show, or review magazine advertisements to engage in the process of inferring. The teacher could guide the discussion by asking:

■ What did you see? Hear? Feel?

■ What didn't you see? Hear? Feel?

■ What conclusions can you draw from your observations?

■ What evidence led you to this conclusion?

■ How and why do written texts, visual materials, and oral presentations encourage you to make inferences or generalizations?

In small groups, students could brainstorm a situation (e.g., homework problems) to role-play for the class and ask the rest of the class to make inferences about what is happening, to identify evidence that led them to their conclusions, and to determine whether enough information is provided to make reasonable generalizations.

Next, students could be provided with two excerpts: the beginning and end of a short story. Before reading the first excerpt, each student could write several predictions about the story from its title. After reading the first excerpt, volunteers could share predictions that were confirmed, disconfirmed, or unanswered in the text. Students could also generate discussion questions about the text, focusing on situations or ideas that they wondered about or found puzzling. Several of these questions could be selected by the students to discuss in class. Throughout the discussion, the teacher could encourage students to think about what they are allowed to "see" in the text; what seems to be missing from the text; why the author made specific decisions about the characters, plot, etc.; what conclusions were reached using information beyond the text; and how interpretations can differ because of one's personal experiences.

With a partner, students could peruse the first excerpt, selecting phrases or sentences that seem to describe the principal characters. Class members could share their sentences and make tentative generalizations about each character's behavior, motivation, or intention(s).

Students could read the second excerpt, raising questions they have about the text or its central theme. The class could address these questions in a large-group discussion, indicating what they think about the characters and the short story's theme and providing evidence from the text to support inferences they have made. Students could reread the second excerpt, selecting phrases or sentences that seem to represent the principal characters at this point. Students could compare the two lists, noting if the language used to describe the characters has changed in tone and whether their initial generalizations about the characters matched the author's choices.

Suggestions for Assessment

Anecdotal Notes—During class discussions, the teacher might want to take notes about skills students are demonstrating, such as making thoughtful observations, making generalizations, or giving evidence to support their opinions.

Scoring Rubric—A four-point rubric could be developed to assess students' understanding of the short story. As part of their task, students could select a slogan or jingle, a piece of music or artwork, or a poem or proverb that represents their interpretation of the story's two excerpts. Students could describe, in writing, how their selection captures the story's message and how this message is reflected through significant events in the story.

Ideas for Progress

- Draw reasonable conclusions about people and situations using evidence presented in a text

- Examine information from multiple sources and perspectives (including the author's or narrator's) in order to make reasonable generalizations about people, objects, ideas, and situations

- Change the wording of a text in order to convey a different tone or attitude (e.g., from persuasive to serious)

- Determine the author's or narrator's position toward a specific topic, issue, or idea by noting key facts, claims, and details from the text

Suggested Strategies/Activities

Students could be encouraged to write letters of recommendation for one of the characters from the short story they just read. The letters could recommend the character for a job, an award, or entry into college or another academic program. Students could be asked to compose two letters; the first letter could be written from the perspective of a close friend while the second could be written from an adult perspective (a teacher, principal, employer, etc.). Students would need to determine each writer's attitude toward the character, considering such writing issues as tone, clarity, and word choice. Students would also need to determine qualities their character possesses, making reasonable generalizations based on information provided in the short story. Students should use specific details from the short story to support their generalizations. Students could compare both letters to see how they differ, analyzing their precision and use of language.

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

ACT developed this guide to show the link between the PLAN Reading Test results and daily classroom work. The guide serves as a resource for teachers, curriculum coordinators, and counselors by explaining what the College Readiness Standards say about students' academic progress.

The guide explains how the test questions on the PLAN Reading Test are related to the College Readiness Standards and describes what kinds of reasoning skills are measured. The sample instructional activities and classroom assessments suggest some approaches to take to help students develop and apply their reasoning skills.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

ACT recognizes that teachers are the essential link between instruction and assessment. We are committed to providing you with assistance as you continue your efforts to provide quality instruction.

ACT is always looking for ways to improve its services. We welcome your comments and questions. Please send them to:

College Readiness Standards
Elementary and Secondary School Programs (32)
ACT
P.O. Box 168
Iowa City, IA 52243-0168

"A mind, stretched to a new idea, never goes back to its original dimensions."

— Oliver Wendell Holmes

WHAT OTHER ACT PRODUCTS AND SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE?

In addition to the College Readiness Standards materials, ACT offers many products and services that support school counselors, students and their parents, and others. Here are some of these additional resources:

ACT's Website—**www.act.org** contains a host of information and resources for parents, teachers, and others. Students can visit **www.planstudent.org**, which is designed to aid students as they prepare for their next level of learning.

The ACT—a guidance, placement, and admissions program that helps students prepare for the transition to postsecondary education while providing a measure of high school outcomes for college-bound students.

EXPLORE—an eighth- and ninth-grade assessment program designed to stimulate career explorations and facilitate high school planning.

WorkKeys®—a system linking workplace skill areas to instructional support and specific requirements of occupations.

ACT Online Prep™—an online test preparation program that provides students with real ACT tests and an interactive learning experience.

The Real ACT Prep Guide—the official print guide to the ACT, containing three practice ACTs.

DISCOVER®—a computer-based career planning system that helps users assess their interests, abilities, experiences, and values, and provides instant results for use in investigating educational and occupational options.

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This bibliography is divided into four sections. The first section lists the sources used in describing the PLAN Program, the College Readiness Standards for the PLAN Reading Test, and ACT's philosophy regarding educational testing. The second section, which lists the sources used to develop the instructional activities and assessments, provides suggestions for further reading in the areas of thinking and reasoning, learning theory, and best practice. The third section lists diverse literary works suggested by classroom teachers that could be used in conjunction with the instructional activities on pages 52–63. The fourth section provides a list of resources suggested by classroom teachers.

(Please note that in 1996 the corporate name "The American College Testing Program" was changed to "ACT.")

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Harvard Graduate School of Education. Research Projects. http://www.pzweb.harvard.edu/Research/Research.htm

International Reading Association.
　　http://www.reading.org

James Madison University. Internet School Library
　　Media Center.
　　http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/

Johns Hopkins University & Howard University Center
　　for Research on the Education of Students Placed
　　at Risk (CRESPAR).
　　http://www.csos.jhu.edu/crespar/index.htm

Learning to Read: Resources for Language Arts and
　　Reading Research.
　　http://toread.com

National Women's History Project.
　　http://www.nwhp.org

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Lab
　　National Network.
　　http://www.nwrel.org/national/

PBS TeacherSource.
　　http://www.pbs.org/teachersource

U.S. Department of Education. Education Resource
　　Organizations Directory.
　　http://bcol02.ed.gov/Programs/EROD/
　　org_list.cfm?category_ID=SEA

Prose Fiction passage corresponding to sample test questions found on pages 17 and 19

PROSE FICTION: This passage is adapted from Jamaica Kincaid's novel *Lucy* (©1990 by Jamaica Kincaid).

It was my first day. I had come the night before, a gray-black and cold night before—as it was expected to be in the middle of January, though I didn't know that at the time—and I could not see anything clearly on the
5 way in from the airport, even though there were lights everywhere. As we drove along, someone would single out to me a famous building, an important street, a park, a bridge that when built was thought to be a spectacle. In a daydream I used to have, all these places were
10 points of happiness to me; all these places were lifeboats to my small drowning soul, for I would imagine myself entering and leaving them, and just that—entering and leaving over and over again—would see me through a bad feeling I did not have a name for. I only
15 knew it felt a little like sadness but heavier than that. Now that I saw these places, they looked ordinary, dirty, worn down. It was not my first bout with the disappointment of reality and it would not be my last.

I slept soundly that night, but it wasn't because I
20 was happy and comfortable—quite the opposite; it was because I didn't want to take in anything else.

That morning, the morning of my first day, the morning that followed my first night, was a sunny morning. And so, seeing the sun, I got up and put on a
25 dress, a dress made out of madras cloth—the same sort of dress that I would wear if I were at home and setting out for a day in the country. It was all wrong. The sun

was shining but the air was cold. It was the middle of January, after all. But I did not know that the sun could
30 shine and the air remain cold; no one had ever told me. What a feeling that was! How can I explain? Something I had always known—the way I knew my skin was the color brown of a nut rubbed repeatedly with a soft cloth, or the way I knew my own name—something I
35 took completely for granted, "the sun is shining, the air is warm," was not so. I was no longer in a tropical zone, and this realization now entered my life like a flow of water dividing formerly dry and solid ground, creating two banks, one of which was my past—so familiar and
40 predictable that even my unhappiness then made me happy now just to think of it—the other my future, a gray blank, an overcast seascape on which rain was falling and no boats were in sight.

What a surprise this was to me, that I longed to be
45 back in the place that I came from, that I longed to sleep in a bed I had outgrown. Oh, I had imagined that with my one swift act—leaving home and coming to this new place—I could leave behind me, as if it were an old garment never to be worn again, my sad thoughts, my sad
50 feelings, and my discontent with life in general as it presented itself to me. In the past, the thought of being in my present situation had been a comfort, but now I did not even have this to look forward to, and so I lay down on my bed and dreamt I was eating a bowl of pink
55 mullet and green figs cooked in coconut milk, and it had been cooked by my grandmother, which was why the taste of it pleased me so.

Prose Fiction passage corresponding to sample test question found on page 17

PROSE FICTION: This passage is adapted from the novel *The Red Camp* by Debra Diaz (©1996 by Debra Diaz). In the passage, *Arabians* refers to a breed of horses.

I draw horses. Over and over and over again until each arch of the neck, curve of the flank and angle in the fetlock is perfect. Horses are all I think about. I draw them, study them, collect all sizes of horse
5 figures.

Mrs. DeAngelis, my sixth-grade teacher, has asked Janine, Stacey, and me to stay after school. She wants to know why every day before school, during recess, after lunch and sometimes even after school, she sees
10 the three of us running around the fields like we're crazy. I don't want to say anything, but she threatens us with detention. So Stacey steps up and tells her about the secret club we formed and how we're practicing real hard to make the next Olympics. Mrs. DeAngelis
15 smiles and says she's very proud of us. Janine and I say nothing, marveling at how easily Stacey can lie.

Our club is not really about the Olympics. We don't talk about it much, but I think it means something different to each one of us. Our club is kind of like a
20 family. A family of horses. And we race because we love to run. We've even made up our own club symbol, which is a large triangle with three small triangles, each small one intersecting one of the three angles of the large triangle. In the center of the large triangle is the
25 letter "A" for Arabians, our club name, and in the center of the small triangles is the initial of each of our secret names. Mine starts with "S" and that is all I can say.

We told our good friend Patty Maloney about the
30 club, and she didn't really understand. Patty likes horses, but she doesn't love horses like we do. When we told her we ARE the horses, she looked at us really weird. I knew we had to stop then. So I laughed and made a joke and said, "Not really," and Stacey and
35 Janine laughed, too.

"How could we possibly be horses?" Stacey roared.

Patty laughed along with us, a kind of crooked, unsure laugh.

40 But we are the horses. Or rather, we become them.

We each have a stable of 25 horses, each horse with its own name, personality and racing style.

Stacey has the long-distance runners. She trains them by running the length of the entire playing field
45 over and over again. She can run forever. Stacey has a deep chest, strong lungs and comes from behind like most good distance runners. But lately her ankles have been bothering her, and we've been discussing getting them fired.

50 The sprinters belong to Janine, who holds the 50-yard dash record and who has calf muscles like small hams. My horses are the middle distancers and I have long, lean legs, strong quick feet and good timing.

Over and over again we race our horses up and
55 down the field, building our strength, increasing our speed and practicing in the winter rain and during the long smoggy summer months.

I guess we are kind of nuts about this, but we do it because we have to. When I'm running, the earth is a
60 part of me. The wind urges me on and the grass springs up below me, lifting me upward and onward. Sometimes I run so fast, I feel I'm galloping on all fours, flying low, devouring the ground. When I'm running nothing else matters. The sun, the mist, the smells
65 take over. I disappear.

Prose Fiction passage corresponding to sample test questions found on pages 18, 20, and 21

PROSE FICTION: This passage is adapted from the short story "Limited Access" by Annette Sanford (©1987 by Annette Sanford).

Miss Ettie is not a house person. She works in her yard most days until it's dark enough to go to bed and she gets out again as soon as it's daylight. I'm putting on my coffee and I can see her over there creeping out
5 of the back door.

We don't know how old she is. Clara says nearly eighty. Another niece, Francey, says eighty-three. There is not much communication between the aunt and the nieces.

10 Miss Ettie says: They don't care about me. They send their children over here with cabbages and figs. I already have cabbages and figs.

Clara and Francey want to give her a TV.

Miss Ettie says: I've got my radio. What do I need
15 a TV for?

Clara and Francey have talked to the welfare woman. They want her in a home. They want her well taken care of. They would see to it themselves, but she doesn't allow them to set foot on her place.

20 The reason is because forty years ago at the home place in the country Miss Ettie fell out with Clara and Francey's mother, her sister Abigail.

Francey says the whole misunderstanding is pre-nuclear anyway. She and Clara could do a lot for Aunt
25 Ettie if Aunt Ettie would let them.

Miss Ettie says to me: Do what? If I have to see a doctor, *you* can carry me there. Of course, I'll pay you whatever you charge.

She calls me up one day, but not to see the doctor.
30 She wants to see the government dam built on the outskirts of town. The backed-up water covers the farm where the frog pond was.

On the way I ask: How big was the farm?

Miss Ettie says: Too small to make a living. Too
35 big for mules. The land was good for watermelons and peanuts. Her father raised corn and killed himself trying.

Miss Ettie took care of her mother. She sold eggs. She sold cabbages and figs and fat dressed hens. She sold pies and jelly. She ironed and took in sewing. She
40 looked after babies and watched over sick people. She picked cotton. She pieced quilts. She sold off a few acres at a time down to the yard fence. When her mother died, she sold that, too, and bought the house in town.

45 Nobody helped you? I ask.

I never needed help.

Miss Ettie takes a look at the government dam. She wants to drive right down to the water, but you can't do that.

50 There's a road, she says. Don't you see it?

I point out a sign. LIMITED ACCESS.

What's that mean?

It means we can't use the road because we're not authorized.

55 The next morning she tromps out in her boots and sticks a sign in the verbenas: LIMITED ACCESS. THAT MEANS YOU.

Clara and Francey ring up right away. What's the cause of that sign?

60 I say the sign is for dogs.

Clara says: We bought the TV.

Francey says: She'll love it once she gets used to it.

They appoint me to make her see she wants it. I go
65 over after breakfast.

I say: The girls bought the TV.

Miss Ettie says: You know why, don't you? They've got an old aunt they don't do anything for.

Is there something you'd like done?

70 Not by them.

It's no use, I tell the girls. Maybe you can trade the thing in on something you'd like yourselves.

They don't listen.

Prose Fiction passage corresponding to sample test questions found on pages 19, 20, and 21

PROSE FICTION: This passage is adapted from a story titled "Chekhov's Gun," by Julia Alvarez (©1984 by Julia Alvarez).

It was a drum my grandmother brought back from a trip to New York, a magnificent drum, its sides bright red, crisscrossed by gold wire held down by gold button heads, its top and bottom white. It had a broad blue
5 strap for putting round your neck, the flat top facing up, for it was a drumroller's drum. Grandmother invested me with it, slipping the strap over my head, lifting the top up. "Ah," I sighed, for in the hollow at the center, two drumsticks were stored. She took them out, tapped
10 the top down, and handed me the drumsticks, understanding that she should not rob me of the thunder of the first wicked drumstick drumroll.

Barra-bam, barra-bam, barra-barra-barra BAM!

"Oh," my grandmother rolled her eyes, "Another
15 Beethoven!"

"What do you say to your grandmother?" Mother asked proudly.

"Barrabarrabarra BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!"

"Young lady!" Mother cried out, and I stopped
20 drumming abruptly so that she yelled out into the suddenly silent room, "THAT'S QUITE ENOUGH!"

"Laura!" my grandmother scowled at her daughter. "Why are you yelling at the child?"

"Grandmother," I said nicely, "Thank you." And
25 then I brought down an apocalyptic, apoplectic, joy-to-the-great-world drumroll that made Grandmother throw her head back and laugh her girlish laugh. Mother plugged a finger in each ear, a great flood of scolding about to come out of her mouth which I held back by
30 drumroll until she snatched the sticks out of my hands

and said she would keep them until I was responsible enough to play my drum like an adult. I forgot all the promises I had made—before being given the drum—to improve my character and wailed, I wanted them back, I
35 wanted them back. Grandmother intervened, and the sticks were put back in the hollow of the drum, and another promise extracted from me that I would not play the drum inside the house.

Grandmother pulled me towards her. She had once
40 been the most beautiful woman in the country. She was a slim woman with the face of a girl, brown doe eyes and white wavy hair in a bun. She looked like a girl who had had a terrible fright and her hair had turned white.

45 "That drum is from a magic store," she consoled me.

"Oh?" Mother said casually, wanting to rejoin the conversation. "Where did you get it?"

"Schwarz," Grandmother said, "F.A.O. Schwarz,"
50 and she promised that one day very soon, if I behaved myself and didn't drive Mother insane with my drum and drank my milk down to the bottom of the glass and brushed up and down instead of across and didn't get into things like lipsticks and perfumes and then pre-
55 tended as I walked through the house reeking of Paris that I did not know what could have happened to the little bottle with a bow tie, she, my favorite grandmother, would take me from Santo Domingo to the United States on an airplane to see Schwarz and the snow. And
60 at this, I could not help myself, but having kidnapped the drumsticks, I gave a modest, tippy-tap, well-behaved drumroll that made Grandmother wink and Mother smile and both agree that in the last five minutes I had indeed grown up to responsible drumming.

Prose Fiction passage corresponding to sample test questions found on pages 19 and 21

PROSE FICTION: This passage is adapted from Helen Norris's short story "The Love Child" (©1983 by Helen Norris).

The wind was brawling out of the north when they told her she had to move. Her son Sam, who was getting gray and stout, and his tall wife Ardis, who dyed her hair the color of peanut brittle, came down from
5 Memphis to tell her, leaving their children with a neighbor overnight.

She was seventy-six. She had lived in her house for fifty years and she refused to leave.

"Mama, they're going to put a highway clean
10 through your house. You wouldn't like that, Mama. Would you want the cars running straight through your living room?"

"Yes," Emma said. She was always difficult when they talked to her like a child. Then she said, "I never
15 gave my consent. They couldn't do it without my consent."

"Mama, they can. How could you live all your life and not know that? The Government can do anything it wants."

20 So they moved her to a little farmhouse on the outskirts of the town. They bought it for her with the money the Government gave them for her own house in town. And they added some, or so Sam said. Because this house was better built and would last for years. "I
25 don't need one that will last," she said. But they didn't listen. It had ten acres of land that stretched back from the road, with a lot of underbrush that needed clearing and trees and a pond with fish that moved like shadows through the feathers of green scum.

30 "I don't need all this," she said, looking at it from the back porch with her head wrapped in a brown scarf.

"You'll get used to it, Mama. It's a good investment."

She knew they meant that when she died they
35 could sell it at a profit. They expected her to die, she thought. And very soon. But if she thought that, she was wrong: She found they were expecting her to live. After all the work of birthing, raising, nursing, grieving, they wanted one thing more.

40 Meanwhile in the new place she lasted out the winter, beat it down into the ground. Actually it seemed to disappear into the trees and lie in wait on the other side of the hill. Oh, she hated winter, always had. But it was better in the town, with Mrs. Ellis coming in for coffee.
45 And Mr. Greer, the postman, stamping through the slush and ringing her bell. And the boy from the grocery blowing into his hands, Effie Higgins' boy. . . . The days were draughty, noisy with the wind, but they were full of faces she could wave to from her window if
50 she felt like waving. You get older and the world is changing and you hardly know yourself except for people who have always known you and you can see it in their faces who you are. Then you know.

Here the days were long and soaked with rain and
55 all her past, and no one was coming in or passing by. Even the rain was different, blowing now from the left instead of the right. She took off her steel-rimmed glasses and stared at her face, all blurry, in the mirror. It's what I'm like inside, she said. I don't know who I
60 am. I'm blurred inside.

Prose Fiction passage corresponding to sample test questions found on page 20

PROSE FICTION: This passage is adapted from the short story "House of Snow" by Kate Wesselman, which appeared in *Nimrod: International Journal of Prose & Poetry* (©1993 by the Arts & Humanities Council of Tulsa).

Once, I spent three hours with my father. I was eight and a half. He was between planes. We sat in the middle of a long set of eggshell-shaped chairs at the airport.

5　Dad was fidgety. He was expected in Anchorage, Alaska, that evening, was to climb Mt. McKinley the next week. He checked his watch, compared it with the list of arrivals and departures near the gate. He gave me a Swiss Army knife I could keep. He showed me how 10 his altimeter worked. But the fog smothering the airport windows kept his plane from taking off.

I'd only expected to have twenty-two minutes with him. Mom had read me his letter two weeks before. There were twenty-two minutes between planes on the 15 trip north from Santiago. Would I like to see him? Could Mom drive me to the airport?

I'd prepared for weeks. I'd stapled together a small book of drawings and baked snickerdoodles for his climb. I'd sewed a small felt satchel for his money and 20 I'd planned an outfit centered around a pair of hiking boots that I was sure would impress him. I'd carefully mapped out the entire twenty-two minutes, and the delay, the lucky fog, gave us nearly three hours.

We'd never spent that much time together. His eyes 25 darted about the airport, resting on the woman with the leopard-skin purse, on the man with the hat reading the paper. I huddled up in the colorful blanket he'd brought me from Chile and he told me all about his ascent of Aconcagua, the highest peak in South America. 30 As I watched his big chapped hands punctuate the adventure, I recognized the shortened contour of his thumbs, realized that his fingertips were squared off on top, like mine.

"How big is McKinley?" I asked.

35　His eyes danced. "A hair over twenty," he said, sitting up in his chair. "But it's not the altitude, it's the weather. It's so far north, the storms can be quite severe."

I nodded, looking down at the massive legs, the 40 enormous leather boots, the natty red socks.

"Do you ever get scared of dying?" I asked.

"I do," he said, "I won't lie to you."

"Do you think you'll die on McKinley?"

"I might," he said, "I might not, there's always that 45 risk."

"I hope I remember you," I said.

He sighed. He seemed to turn this about for a while. "I sure could use a cup of joe," he said.

We walked across the corridor to the snack bar.

50　"Coffee?" he asked.

I'd never had a cup, but I nodded anyway.

We sat down at a small table near the window. Dad positioned himself so he could watch his gate and listen for announcements. I sat facing the window where I 55 could see the planes roar down the runway. Dad augmented his coffee with a heavy hand of cream and three packets of sugar.

"You shouldn't drink coffee," he told me, "It'll stunt your growth."

60　"I won't tell Mom," I said, taking a careful sip, and he nodded.

After a silence, he said, "I guess I should tell you about myself, then."

"So I remember you?"

65　He sighed and sipped his coffee. "This may be your only chance to get the truth," he said. Then he began to tell me about how he got to be himself.

Social Science passage corresponding to sample test question found on page 17

SOCIAL SCIENCE: This passage is adapted from an essay by Ellen Goodman that appeared in *Keeping in Touch* (©1985 by The Washington Post Company).

Twenty years ago, when Valentina Tereshkova went into space, she was followed by an appalling trail of words. The Russians' "smiling cosmonette" and "dimpled space sister" had "her feminine curves hidden
5 in a clumsy space suit." You get the idea.

Sally Ride, in turn, suffered some before she went up in the Challenger. Johnny Carson quipped that the launch was being postponed until Sally could find the purse to match her shoes. A *Time* magazine writer
10 asked if she wept when things went wrong.

By lift-off, however, the media were just about as (1) tamed, (2) repressed, or (3) enlightened as we could have hoped. Indeed, it was Sally Ride's name which seemed to provide more twists, puns, and plays on
15 words for headline writers than her sex. To wit: "Ride, Sally Ride," "Sally Rides High," and "Sally's Joy Ride."

Still, what we are witnessing is a classic case of First Womanitis, a social disease that comes with pro-
20 longed exposure to the spotlight. Sally Ride, First American Woman in Space, is taking this trip right into history while her male companions are destined for the trivia shows.

She is also, like it or not, joining a large sorority
25 whose ranks include Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman to be graduated from an American medical school, in 1849, and Ruth Wilson, the first woman hired as a street cleaner by the Philadelphia Sanitation Department, in 1976.

30 When all is said and done, Sally Ride is just an-
other First Woman.

Ride is luckier than many of the others in this sorority. People are rooting for her, rather than against her. But the initiation rites are by now familiar.

35 As a First Woman, she is watched and called upon to explain her very existence in a way that her co-travelers are not. She is asked opinions on everything "female"—from fashion to feminism—and everyone offers opinions about her from her fashions to her
40 feminism.

Nearly all of the select have felt this glare of extra-ordinariness, even in their more earthly pursuits. Nearly all of them have sighed, at some moment, as Ride did, "It may be too bad that our society isn't further along
45 and that this is such a big deal."

But most First Women share something else: a special conflict. There is the desire to be accepted as a self-made woman, a person who was and is judged on individual merit. There is the realization that each car-
50 ries a load of other women's frustrations and hopes.

Ride has borne the disappointments of women such as those would-be astronauts of 1961, the dozen whose space futures were canceled out because "the times" were not ripe. She has also taken on the hopes of
55 a generation of young girls in search of heroines. When it all gets to be too much, she flips "the switch marked 'oblivious.'" Maybe First Women wear that switch like a sorority pin.

In any case, Ride is now initiated. She's learned
60 the rules. Being a full-fledged First Woman means car-rying your self as a second job. Being a First Woman means taking every step for womankind. It's not easy, but the company is fine.

Social Science passage corresponding to sample test question found on page 18

SOCIAL SCIENCE: This passage is adapted from David Brinkley's *Washington Goes to War* (©1988 by David Brinkley).

In 1783, the British defeated and the American Revolution ended, the new Congress was already irritated at being forced to move its deliberations from one city to another for the previous six years to escape the
5 British army. Now, settled in Philadelphia, it was infuriated again because it was threatened by its own army, a rowdy mob of its newly disbanded soldiers gathered in the street noisily demanding to be paid. Congress responded with a resolution. It asked the Philadelphia au-
10 thorities to call out their own militia to remove the soldiers from the street. The troops were, according to James Madison's notes, "muttering offensive words and wantonly pointing their muskets to the windows of the hall of Congress."

15 Philadelphia responded that it did not believe Congress being disturbed in its labors was sufficient provocation for calling out its militia.

Congress was so enraged it left Philadelphia and held its next session in Princeton, New Jersey. There,
20 Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts offered a resolution to build a permanent place for a federal government on the banks of the Delaware or Potomac river "if a suitable site can be found."

Everyone agreed that Congress needed a meeting
25 place under its own control and insulated from local political pressures and from such threats as drunken soldiers, but there was no agreement on where this place should be. There were numerous offers over the next several years. But Congress rejected them all, out of
30 sectional jealousies, hope for commercial advantage, and for such reasons as South Carolina's dislike of Philadelphia because it had too many Quakers who opposed slavery.

Then two states, Maryland and Virginia, offered
35 both land and money. They would provide between them one hundred square miles of land, on both sides of the Potomac River, and would give $192,000 for new government buildings. An attractive offer, but still not good enough to end the rivalries among the states until
40 Alexander Hamilton of New York, the first secretary of the treasury under the new Constitution, saw a chance to make a deal. He wanted the new federal government to assume responsibility for the debts the individual state governments had run up during the Revolution. He
45 saw that those to whom the debts were owed were mostly wealthy and influential men; if the new central government owed them money, they would be more likely to work for its survival and stability. The Southern states opposed this idea, because most of
50 those who were owed money were Northerners. And the money to pay the debt would have to be raised by increasing the government's only real source of revenue, the tariff on imports, which the Southerners also opposed because they, more than the North, were a rural,
55 agrarian people dependent on imported manufactured goods. Hamilton got his way only by agreeing to support a new capital city in the South, on the Potomac River. On July 15, 1790, Congress voted to remain in Philadelphia for ten years and then move to a new
60 "Federal City" to be constructed somewhere along the Potomac. And so Washington, D.C., was born as it was to live—with a political deal.

HUMANITIES: This passage is adapted from Mary Helen Washington's literary essay "Commentary on Andrea Lee" (©1991 by Mary Helen Washington).

Andrea Lee's autobiographical first novel, *Sarah Phillips,* first appeared as a series of short stories in The New Yorker in 1983 and 1984. The young protagonist, Sarah Phillips, grows up in a Philadelphia suburb where
5 the neat, tree-lined streets and rambling houses of the elite black families who live there represent the culmination of the dreams of the doctors, ministers and teachers whose own childhoods were more narrowly defined by the row houses of Philadelphia's inner city.
10 Born in 1953, Sarah is the daughter of a Baptist minister and a schoolteacher. By any standards, her childhood is a privileged one.

The sense of abundance in Sarah's world is conveyed through the child's keen awareness of the richly
15 sensual details of her childhood: the alluring smell of morning breakfast, the fragrance of hot clean clothes, the cheerful sound of her mother's voice, the cicadas singing in the summer night, the smell of smoke from burning autumn leaves, slippery patent leather shoes
20 and starched eyelet dresses—all mark the childhood of privilege as well as the development of the imagination of the child whose destiny (as the author) is to write.

We see Sarah's mother giving her permission to indulge in these "chaotic feasts of the imagination,"
25 and, through her own example, confirming the daughter's right to an imaginative and artistic life. Sarah's attraction to her mother's love of words and her pleasure in the bizarre aspects of life remind me very much of the young Selina Boyce and her relationship to her
30 mother, Silla, in Paule Marshall's *Brown Girl,*

Brownstones (1959). Selina also is drawn to her mother's kitchen—for its smells of Barbadian delicacies. Selina's mother makes her think of words as living things "bestriding the air and charging the room with
35 strong colors." In both these stories it is the mother who provides the daughter the model of a powerful female figure, allowing the daughter to take up the subversive pen. Adrienne Rich says that women writers must find such a maternal figure in order to write, and she says
40 this figure is rarely their mothers. But there are many such mothers in black women's literature. Sarah's mother is a tamer version of the passionate and vengeful Silla Boyce, but she too has had her subversive moments. Her willingness to engage her daughter in the
45 "troubling yet oddly exhilarating dialogue about pain and loss" makes me realize how often the writer-daughter describes herself as her mother's peer, acting as an adult long before she is one. When Silla is angry with Selina, she sees in her daughter's face her own rebel-
50 liousness and resistance, and she knows her daughter is equal to her own anger. In her memoir, *Generations* (1976), Lucille Clifton tells the story of being sent downtown by her mother to return a ring her mother couldn't pay for because her mother was afraid to go. In
55 some way these womanlike girl children are describing the process by which they become equal to or superior to the mother, preparing to write themselves and their version of their mothers into existence.

HUMANITIES: This passage is adapted from N. Scott Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (©1969 by the University of New Mexico Press).

A single knoll rises out of the plain in Oklahoma, north and west of the Wichita Range. For my people, the Kiowas, it is an old landmark, and they gave it the name Rainy Mountain. The hardest weather in the
5 world is there. Winter brings blizzards, hot tornadic winds arise in the spring, and in summer the prairie is an anvil's edge. The grass turns brittle and brown, and it cracks beneath your feet. There are green belts along the rivers and creeks, linear groves of hickory and
10 pecan, willow and witch hazel. At a distance in July or August the steaming foliage seems almost to writhe in fire. Great green and yellow grasshoppers are every-where in the tall grass, popping up like corn to sting the flesh, and tortoises crawl about on the red earth, going
15 nowhere in the plenty of time. Loneliness is an aspect of the land. All things in the plain are isolate; there is no confusion of objects in the eye, but *one* hill or *one* tree or *one* man. To look upon that landscape in the early morning, with the sun at your back, is to lose the
20 sense of proportion. Your imagination comes to life, and this, you think, is where Creation was begun.

I returned to Rainy Mountain in July. My grand-mother had died in the spring, and I wanted to be at her grave. She had lived to be very old and at last infirm.
25 Her only living daughter was with her when she died, and I was told that in death her face was that of a child.

I like to think of her as a child. When she was born, the Kiowas were living that last great moment of their history. For more than a hundred years they had
30 controlled the open range from the Smokey Hill River to the Red, from the headwaters of the Canadian to the fork of the Arkansas and Cimarron. In alliance with the Comanches, they had ruled the whole of the Southern Plains. War was their sacred business, and they were
35 among the finest horsemen the world has ever known. But warfare for the Kiowas was preeminently a matter of disposition rather than of survival, and they never undertook the grim, unrelenting advance of the U.S. Cavalry. When at last, divided and ill-provisioned, they
40 were driven onto the Staked Plains in the cold rains of autumn, they fell into panic. In Palo Duro Canyon they abandoned their crucial stores to pillage and had noth-ing then but their lives. In order to save themselves, they surrendered to the soldiers at Fort Sill and were
45 imprisoned in the old stone corral that now stands as a military museum. My grandmother was spared the hu-miliation of those high gray walls by eight or ten years, but she must have known from birth the affliction of de-feat, the dark brooding of old warriors.

50 Her name was Aho, and she belonged to the last culture to evolve in North America. Her forebears came down from the high country in western Montana nearly three centuries ago. They were a mountain people, a mysterious tribe of hunters whose language has never
55 been positively classified in any major group. In the late seventeenth century they began a long migration to the south and east. It was a journey toward the dawn, and it led to a golden age.

Humanities passage corresponding to sample test question found on page 18

HUMANITIES: This passage is adapted from Charles Hamm's *Music in the New World* (©1983 by Recorded Anthology of American Music, Inc.).

Military bands and their music were brought to America by the British Army in the eighteenth century. Foot troops marched to fife and drum, the cavalry had mounted trumpets and kettledrums. When British regi-
5 ments came to the New World during the French and Indian War, some were accompanied by "bands of music" of eight to ten musicians—oboes, bassoons, clarinets, and French horns, in pairs. Sometimes called *Harmoniemusik,* these units were attached to the officer
10 corps.

Typical of the military music played by these bands in America before the Revolution are the marches written by General John Reid (1721–1807), a Scotsman who served under Lord Jeffrey Amherst in the 1760s.
15 *March for the 3rd Regiment of Foot, Lord Amhersts,* scored for winds in pairs, has a simple binary form (*AABB*), as did almost all marches of the time.

The colonial militia also employed musicians. With the onset of war, a Continental Army was orga-
20 nized on the British model. Comprised of twenty-seven infantry regiments and one of artillery, with each regiment made up of eight companies, it included two fifers and two drummers in each company. Their music has been preserved in a number of manuscripts—the most
25 important one written in 1777 by Giles Gibbs, Jr.—and in printed instruction books for fife, such as the *Compleat Tutor for the Fife,* published by George Willig in Philadelphia around 1805. Tunes were borrowed from the British. Many have the flavor of Irish or
30 Scottish song. Usually made up of two strains, they resemble fiddle tunes of the day, and, in fact, many melodies are common to both repertories.

Though some bands organized during the Revolution continued their existence after the war, and
35 new military bands were created, the chief growth of the American band during the postwar decades took place in towns and villages. Samuel Holyoke offered instrumental instruction in several towns in New England and published the two volumes of his *The Instrumental*
40 *Instructor,* in 1800 and 1807. *Jolley's March,* brought out in a similar publication by Joseph Herrick (1772–1807) in Exeter, New Hampshire (*The Instrumental Preceptor*), is clearly designed for players

just learning the rudiments of their instruments.
45 Holyoke's second volume contains pieces for larger bands: *First Grand March* is scored for seven instruments—violins, oboes, and French horns in pairs, with a bass line for bassoon.

As instruction in instrumental performance became
50 more common, the size of instrumental forces in such bands increased. A typical piece of about 1820, the *Kennebec March* by Ezekial Goodale is scored for eleven instruments—pairs of flutes, clarinets, bassoons, and French horns, augmented by trumpet, serpent, and
55 drum. Pieces also became longer and more complex in structure. Oliver Shaw's *Gov. Arnold's March,* one of a series of marches written by this Providence-based composer for the governors of Rhode Island, is in the usual binary form with the addition of a third strain, a
60 trio: *AABB / CC / AB*.

A dramatic change in the makeup of American bands took place in the mid-1830s, with the wholesale introduction of keyed brass instruments. With the invention of the keyed bugle and an ophicleide, a full
65 range of brass instruments was now capable of playing complete diatonic—and even chromatic—scales. These new horns could not only play melodic lines in any part of their range, they could also supply full harmonic support. Existing bands changed to an all-brass instrumen-
70 tation and new brass bands were formed.

By combining these new instruments with trombones and French horns, a group of eight or more brass instruments could cover a range from soprano to bass and achieve a more homogeneous sound than had been
75 possible with mixed woodwinds and brass.

Between 1842 and 1845, the Frenchman Adolphe Sax perfected an entire family of keyed brass instruments, making possible an even more homogeneous sound. They had the added advantage of standardized
80 notation of fingering. These saxhorns, as they were called, were accepted almost immediately in America.

Humanities passage corresponding to sample test question found on page 21

HUMANITIES: This passage is adapted from Richard Wolkomir's article "American Sign Language: 'It's not mouth stuff—it's brain stuff'" (©1992 by the Smithsonian Institution).

The special nature of American Sign Language (ASL) provides unprecedented opportunities to observe how the brain is organized to generate and understand language. Spoken languages are produced by largely
5 unobservable movements of the vocal apparatus and received through the brain's auditory system. Signed languages, by contrast, are delivered through highly visible movements of the arms, hands and face, and are received through the brain's visual system. Engagement
10 of these different brain systems in language use makes it possible to test different ideas about the biological basis of language.

The prevailing view of neurologists is that the brain's left hemisphere is the seat of language, while the
15 right controls our perception of visual space. But since signed languages are expressed spatially, it was unclear where they might be centered.

To find out, ASL investigator Ursula Bellugi and her colleagues at the Salk Institute's Laboratory for
20 Cognitive Neuroscience studied lifelong deaf signers who had suffered brain damage as adults. When the damage had occurred in their left hemisphere, the signers could shrug, point, shake their heads and make other gestures, but they lost the ability to sign. As hap-
25 pens with hearing people who suffer left-hemisphere damage, some of them lost words while others lost the ability to organize grammatical sentences, depending on precisely where the damage had occurred.

Conversely, signers with right-hemisphere damage
30 signed as well as ever, but spatial arrangements confused them. One of Bellugi's right-hemisphere subjects could no longer perceive things to her left. Asked to describe a room, she reported all the furnishings as being on the right, leaving the room's left side a void. Yet she
35 signed perfectly, including signs formed on the left side. She had lost her sense of *topographic* space, a right-hemisphere function, but her control of *linguistic* space, centered in the left hemisphere, was intact. All of these findings support the conclusion that language, whether
40 visual or spoken, is under the control of the left hemisphere.

One of the Salk research group's current efforts is to see if learning language in a particular modality changes the brain's ability to perform other kinds of
45 tasks. Researchers showed children a moving light tracing a pattern in space, and then asked them to draw what they saw. "Deaf kids were way ahead of hearing kids," says Bellugi. Other tests, she adds, back up the finding that learning sign language improves the mind's ability
50 to grasp patterns in space.

Salk linguist Karen Emmorey says the lab also has found that deaf people are better at generating and manipulating mental images. "We found a striking difference in ability to generate mental images and to
55 tell if one object is the same as another but rotated in space, or is a mirror image of the first," she says, noting that signers seem to be better at discriminating between faces, too.

Humanities passage corresponding to sample test question found on page 21

HUMANITIES: This passage is adapted from S. Frederick Starr's article "Bandstands and American Urbanism" (©1987 by Oberlin College).

To relax on the grass in a park, the local brass band seated on a picturesque bandstand and preparing to strike up an air—this was the quintessence of summer bliss in the United States for three generations. Most
5 towns possessed a bandstand, and few failed to boast of the fact through the postcards available to visitors. From Fort Allen Park in Portland, Maine, to Wright Park in Tacoma, Wash., bandstands served as symbols of local identity, civic pride and a community's cultural
10 commitment.

Today, bandstands evoke sentimental reveries of America's simpler days, of a time when innocence was still intact. Many small towns may once have fit this image. But in the post–Civil War era most American
15 communities already were beset by powerful centrifugal forces. Industry and commerce had widened the gap between rich and poor. Successive waves of immigrants washed away homogeneity in religion and even language. Increasingly, the preacher, politician and writer
20 spoke to and for his or her own. Tract housing isolated groups and classes as never before. Electric street railways enabled people to flee in whatever direction they wished, reinforcing their isolation.

Music has the power to bridge social and cultural
25 barriers, however. . . .

The bandstand itself was everywhere considered neutral territory, and the audience assembled there was drawn from the entire community. Standing or sitting in an informal circle, members of the public faced one
30 another in what was probably one of the few settings where Americans still smiled together. From the Civil War through World War I, bandstands were America's great social condensers, architectural embodiments of the national motto, *E pluribus unum.* Through them, the
35 alienated individual was at least briefly reintegrated with society.

Few bandstands were built before the Civil War. The manufacture of piston-valved horns was still in its infancy, and the meeting house, town hall and church
40 still met Americans' need for assembly space. Few bandstands were erected until after Appomattox. It is very likely that weary veterans, both Blue and Gray, promoted local band concerts as a nostalgic evocation of wartime camp life, recalled in the peaceful setting of
45 family and community.

[But] by World War I the entire range of urban ideals that had inspired the construction of thousands of bandstands nationwide was under attack from every side. Henry Ford's Model Ts now enabled Americans to
50 motor through the countryside on Saturday afternoon rather than congregate with neighbors around the bandstand. Vernon and Irene Castle had set the whole country dancing the one-step, two-step, shimmy and fox trot. Shorter hemlines, bobbed [short] hair, soft collars and
55 the pocket [liquor] flask reflected young Americans' determined assault on their parents' Victorian mores. Jazz, which crystallized these developments, lured musicians and audiences alike. Recordings—Sousa denounced them as "canned music"—and the radio made
60 national bands accessible to everyone. The old-time local band concert now seemed hopelessly tame.

Old bandstands fell into disuse. Construction of many new ones was postponed or cancelled.

By now both the brass-band movement and the
65 instinct for urban sociability that underlay it were moribund in most American cities and towns.