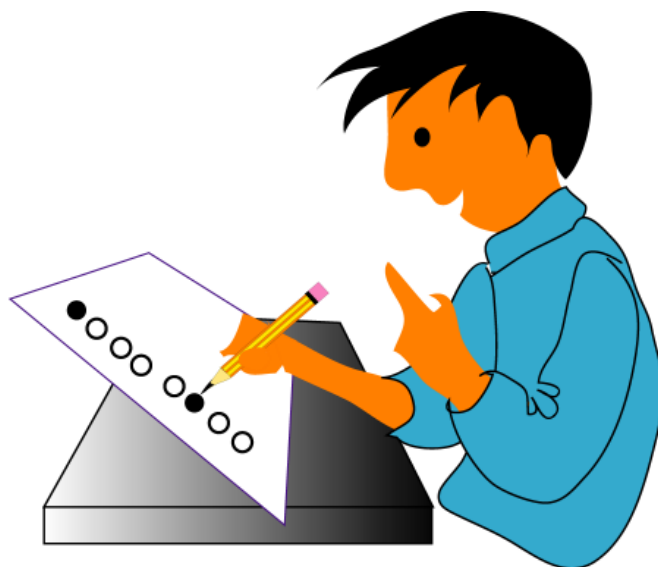


# Preparing Students For Standardized Tests

“Test practice  
is not test preparation.”



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# THE IMPORTANCE OF WIDE READING

"I think it is arguable that *nothing* in the school day matters more to a child's education than time for children to read, with the teacher there to instruct and coach. If children become readers, if they develop the habit of gulping down lots and lots of texts, they end up having a wider knowledge of history, science, vocabulary...and so on. Reading truly is a magic carpet that can take our students anywhere."

page 52



"...although artwork may turn a book into something concrete, it's questionable whether the art work has turned *reading* into something concrete. Perhaps, instead, the artwork has lured children away from the very thing we are trying to support."

page 54

Calkins, Montgomery and Santman (1998)  
*A Teacher's Guide to Standardized Reading Tests*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

## Findings on the Power of Independent Reading

from Stephen Krashen: (Independent Reading is termed Free Voluntary Reading-FVR)

- Among all the ways children spent their time, reading books was the best predictor of success on several **measures of reading achievement**. (p.5)
- Elementary school children acquire from 8-14 new vocabulary words per day. The majority of these words are picked up incidentally through reading. It is argued that word meanings are picked up ten times faster through reading than direct vocabulary instruction. (p.15)
- Students who read 1 million words per year (about 20-30 minutes per day) acquire 3-5000 new vocabulary words for free! These words are understood and remembered through the rich context of reading texts that interest students.
- More reading is associated with better performance on tests of reading comprehension, but more workbook exercises are not. (p.19)

Source: Krashen, S. (1993) *The Power of Reading*. Englewood, CO Libraries Unlimited, Inc.

# I. READING STAMINA

## THE IMPORTANCE OF WIDE READING

### Procedures for Setting Up an Independent Reading Program

1. Students must have access to as wide a range of reading materials possible.

*A classroom library for elementary school should include:*

- Reading material which represents the reading level range of your students
- A wide range of genres (multicultural, folk & fairy tales, poetry etc.)
- Nonfiction material on a variety of topics interesting to the students
- Magazines, newspapers and comic books
- Dictionaries usable by students

2. Reading material needs to be organized in such a way that students can select and return books easily.



### Ideas for Book Organization

- Establish **ground rules** for independent reading time through role play, teacher modeling, clearly posted rules and procedures, and consistent consequences for students who do not follow the ground rules.
- Provide additional **support** to foster independence for students as needed. This may include help with selecting appropriate books, buddy reading of more difficult material, and review of strategies used to handle unknown words.
- During independent reading time allow students to **choose** what they would like to read. If the goal of any literacy program is to produce independent readers and writers who choose to read what interests them and fulfills their needs, then we must allow a time for this to occur on a daily basis. Providing choice gives students the opportunity to develop their own tastes and preferences as readers.
- Many teachers choose to hold **book talks** during independent reading time once per week. Students sign up to share their opinions about the books they are reading with their peers. This process generates much student interest in reading a wide range of material.



# I. READING STAMINA

## THE IMPORTANCE OF WIDE READING

### Repeated Reading of Familiar Books for Beginning Readers

Children need to have access to copies of books they are familiar with through guided and shared reading experiences in order to:

- Practice effective strategies on easy material
- Read with fluency and expression
- Experience the pleasure of revisiting favorites
- Become more familiar with story structure and vocabulary
- Problem solve independently



Give children easy access to these familiar books by placing book baskets containing recent guided reading selections around the room. Create a designated area for recent shared reading texts in large or small format so that students can reread the material.

*Adapted from p. 31 Apprenticeship in Literacy (See Chapter 3 for more information)*

"When readers are allowed to reread familiar material, they are being allowed to learn to be readers, to read in ways that draw on all their language resources and knowledge of the work. The orchestration of these complex behaviors cannot be achieved on a hard book."

p. 184 Clay (1991) *Becoming Literate*. Heinemann

### Informal Reading Assessment with Reading Conferences

Independent reading time (SSR) is the ideal time to monitor individual reading strategies, levels, and habits. Ask one or two students to read with you daily for a few minutes during this period and check for:

- **Reading level:** can they accurately read 90% or more of the words with ease?
- **Reading fluency:** does their oral reading include smooth phrasing and adequate speed?
- **Reading Comprehension:** can they answer both literal and interpretive questions such as:



#### Literal

*Right there in the text* sample questions:

- Who are the main characters?
- What was \_\_\_\_\_ doing in the beginning of the story?
- How did \_\_\_\_\_ do \_\_\_\_\_?
- What happened after \_\_\_\_\_?

#### Inferential

*Between the lines* sample questions:

- Why do you think \_\_\_\_\_ did \_\_\_\_\_?
- What is the character like?
- How did the author feel about \_\_\_\_\_ ?
- What was the most important thing the story told you about \_\_\_\_\_ ?
- What do you think about the way \_\_\_\_\_ solved the problem in the story? Why?

# I. READING STAMINA

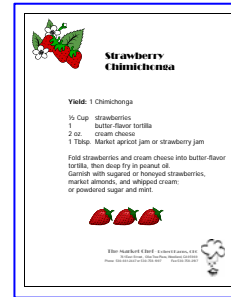
## THE IMPORTANCE OF WIDE READING

### Supporting Wide Reading

Standardized reading tests require students to be able to read a wide variety of text types including:

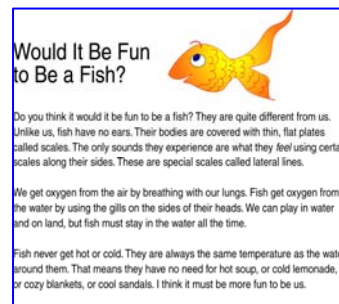
#### Functional Text types:

- Procedural passages with a question
- Lists of Rules
- Informal Flyer (i.e., Walkathon: who can participate, sign up, dates, etc.)
- Recipes
- Informational Flyer (i.e., Museum: hours, facility, activities, etc.)
- Directions (i.e., Seed Packet)
- Directions (i.e., How-To project & Game)
- Instructions for submitting writing to a magazine
- Coupon advertisement with order form



#### Expository Text types:

- Informative short essays
- Biography
- Persuasive editorials



#### Other: Tables, charts and graphs

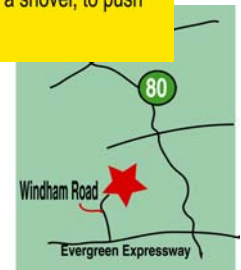
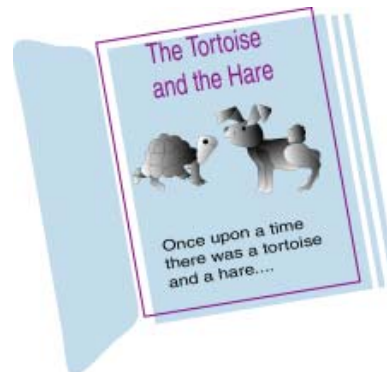
- Dictionary- guide words, entry (syllable division & definition), pronunciation guide
- Table of Contents and The Index
- Semantic Web
- Card Catalog, call #, Author, Title, Publishing Information
- Maps

Index	
Cats	page 89-91
Dogs	page 1-14, 47-53
Kangaroos	page 22
Pine	page 2,7,80-91
	page 117

**shov-el (shuv'el) n.** A tool with a long handle and a scoop, used for picking up material or for digging.  
**v.** To move, dig, or scoop up with a shovel; to push or move large amounts rapidly.

#### Narrative Text types:

- Stories
- Poems
- Riddles Letters
- Mysteries
- Fables



### Reading Stamina Table Talk

- o How much time do you spend on reading and reading instruction per day?
- o How much of that time are students actually reading?
- o What is the longest amount of time that your students sustain reading?

## II. AN INDEPENDENT READING CAMPAIGN CHECKLIST

### Strategic Schooling Checklist: Independent Reading Campaign

Reading Campaign Process	Action to date	Next steps
<p><b>TARGET SET for QUANTITY</b> Words, minutes, pages, etc.</p>		
<p><b>SCHOOLWIDE PROMOTION:</b> Assembly, banners, parent involvement, book fairs, celebrations of progress, etc.</p>		
<p><b>CLASSROOM LIBRARIES:</b> Student-friendly organization, check-out system, wide variety levels/genres, appealing to students.</p>		
<p><b>FOCUS on CHOICE and STUDENT INTEREST:</b> Book talks, visits to library, interest surveys, book clubs, etc.</p>		
<p><b>READING LOGS:</b> To mark progress and respond to reading: weekly/monthly, reading response journal, class checklist, school checklist by grade level or classroom.</p>		
<p><b>QUALITY READ ALOUDS:</b> To model the process and peak student interest in authors, genres, topics.</p>		
<p><b>WORD STUDIES:</b> "Grow lists" of semantic (thematic), and structural (spelling and phonics patterns) up in classrooms and added to throughout the week.</p>		
<p><b>INFORMAL READING CONFERENCES:</b> One-on-one meetings with 1-2 students daily to check comprehension, accuracy, fluency, and reading interests.</p>		

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### III. DAILY READING STRATEGIES

#### Reading Strategies to Teach Throughout the Day

Coach your students in strategies for reading diverse texts.

Use **enlarged texts** (charts/posters),  
**big** books, & **overhead transparencies**

#### Model Monitoring Comprehension as you Read:

- Read chunks then pause and **say something** about what you just read.
- Reread **aloud**.
- Reread with your **finger** or a **marker**.
- Read and say, "So this is mainly saying that...".
- Write **key words**, **facts**, etc. in margin of test book or on **post-its**.



#### Provide Guided Practice with Monitoring:

- Have students highlight the key words in the question and find them in the text.
- Write comprehension questions on the board, have students read them, then give students a post-it to place in the text where they locate the answer.
- Do collaborative retellings of short passages.
- Use shared writing techniques to chart retellings.
- Use shared writing techniques to list questions prior to reading.

#### Any response activities to reading need to bring the reader back into the text:

- Draw a picture of something described in a book and refer back to it to make sure all the details in the text are included.
- Sketch a family tree of characters in order to understand relationships in a story.
- Use graphic organizers to help students retain the information they are learning as they read.

#### Reading Discussions Need to:

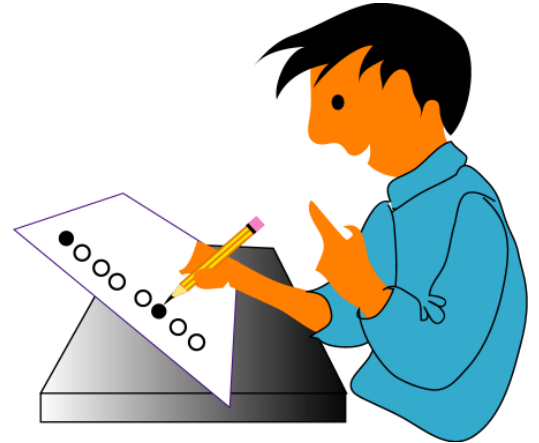
- Begin with retelling.
- Include re-reading aloud the section you want to comment about.
- Ask for evidence directly in the text for their comments/opinions.

## IV. TEST TAKING STRATEGIES: THE THINKING PERSON'S TEST PREP

### Strategies to Teach for Reading Test Items: the “Thinking Person’s Test Prep”

Any protocol for learning how to take tests should have a variety of educational benefits for students by providing them things such as...

- o Test Familiarity
- o Test-Taking Strategies
- o Test Insights
- o Higher-Order Thinking & Reasoning
- o Subject Matter Knowledge
- o Minimal Encroachment Upon Instructional Time



#### Test Prep: Deconstructing One Item at a Time

Most test items have at least **2** arguably correct answers

**AND** most test items require **inferential thinking**, preparing students to be successful test takers requires teaching them to **THINK**, not just choose the answer they like best!

So...

Help students deconstruct one test question at a time:

This should take from **15-30 minutes for each item**.

Therefore, do only **one or two items a day**, preferably every Friday starting at the beginning of the school year.

Have students...

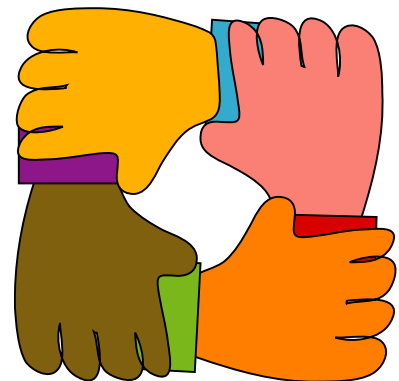
- work together to determine what they think is the correct answer and **why**,
- determine why the incorrect answers are incorrect, discussing which are the most and least incorrect, and
- discuss **why** the test maker chose those particular incorrect answers.

Conduct a **class-wide discussion** to:

- debrief their thinking
- help them clarify fuzzy or faulty thinking

The goal is to...

- ✓ help them learn how test items are designed,
- ✓ to develop an intuition for the “best answer,” and
- ✓ to build confidence.



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## IV. TEST TAKING STRATEGIES: THE THINKING PERSON'S TEST PREP

### Test Prep Protocol (Doug Reeves)

(Based on a recommendation by Doug Reeves – [www.makingstandardswork.com](http://www.makingstandardswork.com))

1. Pass out to each student a sample test item.
2. Have each student mark what he/she believes is the correct answer and be prepared to say why it is correct.
3. Then have each student mark one of the wrong answers and be prepared to say why it is incorrect.
4. Have students divide up into groups of two or more and share with each other their choices for "correct" and "incorrect" and their reasons "why."
5. After a few minutes, end the group activity and debrief with the whole class by focusing on each answer in turn and asking who may have marked it as correct and why, as well as who may have marked it as incorrect and why.
6. Point out insights as they come up related to this type of test:
  - That there is the possibility of two "right" answers, with one being "preferable" or the "best" answer,
  - That at least two answers are often obviously wrong,
  - That reading and understanding the entire stem of the item is crucial,
  - That it is helpful to skim a reading item briefly, then read the questions, & then return to read the piece in detail before answering the questions.
7. Put post-its with key test vocabulary and phrases as they come up on a "parking lot" poster in front of the classroom to be reviewed each week.
8. Vary this protocol from time to time by having the students write out and then discuss their reasons for choosing answers as correct or incorrect.
9. Do this activity at least once a week for about 20 minutes. You may also give students an item or two to take home to do on their own or with their parents following the same protocol as in class with the students playing the part of the teacher.



### Thoughtful Test Taking: The Four Whys Plus One!

1. Why Right?
  2. Why Wrong?
  3. Why Wrong?
  4. Why Wrong?
- and
- ❖ Why did the test maker choose those particular wrong answers?

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*Strategic Schooling*

# IV. TEST TAKING STRATEGIES: THE THINKING PERSON'S TEST PREP

## Some Test-Taking Strategies

### 1. ALWAYS...

- ✓ READ and RE-READ, if necessary, every word in the question BEFORE answering.
- ✓ Skip the hardest items. Go back later, if you have time.

### 2. MAKING A CHOICE IN A MULTIPLE CHOICE ITEM:

- ✓ Pick the right one. Then think through the others to be sure you're right.

OR

- ✓ Eliminate the 2 least likely answers ("Take your 50-50").
- ✓ Then, choose the better of the 2 remaining answers.

### 3. PARAGRAPHS (*No cold reads!!*)

- ✓ Read and think about the title and subtitles first.
- ✓ Skim the text (biggest word in each line or first and last line of each paragraph).
- ✓ Then read each question, skipping back to the text whenever necessary to confirm an answer.

#### EXAMPLE

Which of these is a *synonym* for the word remark?

A benefit

B comment

C attempt

D decision

### 4. MATH

- ✓ Look at the graphics first (elements and relationships).
- ✓ Read the problem 1-3 times, picking out the question.
- ✓ Read the answers and estimate the most likely one. (Take your "50-50" if possible).
- ✓ Do the problem if necessary and make your final choice.

### 5. TABLES, CHARTS, & GRAPHS

- ✓ Identify the key ELEMENTS such as concepts, vocabulary, numbers, components, etc.
- ✓ Try to see the RELATIONSHIPS among them.

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# IV. TEST TAKING STRATEGIES: THE THINKING PERSON'S TEST PREP

## Test Prep: Reading Protocol

1. **Read the title...**Think about what it means. Ask yourself: "what's this all about"

2. **Look at the graphics!**

- ✓ What are the parts?
- ✓ How do they fit?
- ✓ What do they tell me?

3. **Look for features** on both the reading and the questions.

- ✓ **Bold-Face Type**
- ✓ CAPITALS
- ✓ *Italics*
- ✓ Underlines
- ✓ Boxes □□□
- ✓ "Quotes"
- ✓ Numbers...1,2,3,4,5...

4. **Skim the...**

- ✓ **First line** of small paragraphs,
- ✓ The **first** and **last line** of big paragraphs, *and*
- ✓ **All quotes.**

5. **Check out the Questions.**

- Where do I need to go to read?
- Use the **words** in the question to find where the **answer** is in the passage.
- Think about whether you have to read the **whole** passage.

6. **Think about the Answer.**

- Ask why is the correct answer **correct**?
- Ask why is the incorrect answer **incorrect**?
- Ask why did the test maker choose **those** wrong answers?
- **Bounce back** to find more information, but only if **necessary**.



***Posters follow***

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# IV. TEST TAKING STRATEGIES: THE THINKING PERSON'S TEST PREP

**Testing Posters:** Here are smaller samples of the test prep posters we have developed for reading. These 8.5x11 posters are available for downloading from our website at [www.knoxeducation.com](http://www.knoxeducation.com).

**Step 1 Becoming an Expert Test Taker** Warm It Up

**Read the title...THINK**

Spotted Cats

1. Several members of the cat family have spotted fur. Do you know the difference between a leopard, a jaguar, and a cheetah?

**Step 2 Becoming an Expert Test Taker** Warm It Up


**LOOK at the GRAPHICS**

Look at all the parts...  
How do they fit?  
What do they tell me?

Spotted Cats

1. Several members of the cat family have spotted fur. Do you know the difference between a leopard, a jaguar, and a cheetah? From a distance they may appear somewhat similar. Examined at closer range, however, they are clearly different cats. They differ in various ways, including where they live, how big they are, how they move and hunt, and how their fur is marked.

2. Of all the big cats in the wild, the true leopard is found across the largest area. Leopards live in much of Asia and Africa. A leopard grows to be from 3 to 6 feet long, with an added 3 feet of tail. Leopards are skilled climbers that can hunt monkeys in trees. They can also lie in wait and pounce on passing prey. When food sources are scarce, they might eat fruit, field mice, and large insects. Leopard spots are not actually solid spots; they are broken circles.



**Step 3 Becoming an Expert Test Taker** Warm It Up

**LOOK for FEATURES**

439 Recent giant squid sightings in New Zealand have drawn the attention of many scientists. (20) An American Scientist named Dr. Clyde Tager and a team of experts have visited Kalkouros Canyon, an unpopulated canyon. (21) They hope to someday film the giant squid in its natural habitat.

440 Read this excerpt from Document C.

I, the parent or legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, hereby give permission for my child to participate in a youth volleyball with the Animal Shelter of Sacramento County. I authorize Animal Shelter staff to seek immediate medical treatment in case of an accident by using the emergency contact information below.

The phrase give permission and the word authorize suggest that the parent or legal guardian is able.

A. to serve as an adult volunteer.  
B. to give first aid to an injured youth.  
C. to work as a kennel aide.  
D. to grant power to others.

42 An excerpt from a book titled *Stressy, Calm Under Pressure* would provide the strongest support for which section of the essay?

A. "Teaching Good Sportsmanship"  
B. "Knowing Rules"  
C. "Managing Frustration"  
D. "Taking Responsibility"

**SKIM the Questions**

Annotations: boldface type, numbers, quotes, underlines, boxes, CAPS (words that are all in CAPITAL letters), italics, parentheses.

**Step 4 Becoming an Expert Test Taker**

**SKIM, STOP, and THINK**

Read the first line on the skinny paragraphs.

**FIRST line on the SKINNIES**

5. Other spotted cats include the smaller ocelot, mainly of Central and South America, and the bobcat, mainly of North America. What all of these cats have in common is that they are wild, powerful animals of tremendous grace and beauty.

Read the first and the last lines on the fat paragraphs.

**FIRST and LAST on the FATS**

3. The jaguar is native to the Americas. Its natural range is from the southern United States to northern Argentina, with the largest concentration of jaguars being in Brazil and Central America. The beauty and power of the jaguar inspired worship among ancient peoples. It measures between 3 and 6 feet long without the tail, which adds another 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 feet. Possessing a large head and body, the jaguar has legs that are shorter and thicker than a leopard's. Jaguars are excellent climbers and can also swim well. They dine on a variety of land, tree, and water creatures. Their fur can be a vivid yellow color or a rusty shade; their "spots" are called rosettes. Each rosette is large and black, consisting of a middle spot with a circle of spots around it.

**Step 5 Becoming an Expert Test Taker**

**ANSWER - BOUNCE**  
but ONLY if you HAVE to...

Try to answer, but BOUNCE BACK to READING if you have to FIND the answer, or you aren't SURE of the answer.

11. Which of these is the best summary of this passage?

A. All spotted cats are powerful, beautiful, and graceful.  
B. Spotted cats may look similar, but they are different in many ways.  
C. There are many different spotted cats in the world.  
D. Spotted cats in the wild hunt many different kinds of animals.

A. FIND the KEY WORDS to the question.  
B. PLUG and PLAY the KEY WORDS with every answer. Which one seems RIGHT?  
C. The 4 WHYS...

Think of WHY the RIGHT answer is RIGHT  
WHY the first WRONG answer is WRONG  
WHY the next WRONG answer is WRONG  
WHY the last WRONG answer is WRONG and  
WHY did the test makers CHOOSE those particular WRONG ANSWERS?  
How are they trying to TRICK us?

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# IV. TEST TAKING STRATEGIES: THE THINKING PERSON'S TEST PREP

**Test Strategy Icons:** These icons are also available on our website, as single page posters, at [www.knoxeducation.com](http://www.knoxeducation.com).

Guess and Check



Mark the Trick



Mark the Stinker



Identify Clue Words



Reread



Read the Directions

Follow these steps for the next paragraph.

- A. Read the sentence.
- B. Circle the nouns.
- C. Underline the verbs.



Underline the Text

underline



Read the Questions First



Plug and Play



## IV. TEST TAKING STRATEGIES: THE THINKING PERSON'S TEST PREP

### Test Prep: Math Protocol

#### 1. Read the question...at least twice!

- ✓ Change symbols to words or words to symbols
- ✓ Pick out the most relevant information

#### 2. Look at the graphics!

- ✓ What are the parts?
- ✓ How do they fit?
- ✓ What do they tell me?

#### 3. "Guesstimate" the answer if possible.

#### 4. Work the problem...

- ✓ Mathematically, if you know how, or any other way!
- ✓ Ask yourself why is the correct answer **correct**?
- ✓ Ask why is the incorrect answer **incorrect**?
- ✓ Ask why did the test maker choose **those** wrong answers?

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## IV. TEST TAKING STRATEGIES: THE THINKING PERSON'S TEST PREP

# Test Prep in Math: Three Steps to Math Proficiency... one Problem at a Time

### STEP #1

The teacher does the sample test problem with the students, highlighting *key words* in the problem, looking for *patterns*, and doing the "*4 why's + 1*" (why right, why wrong, why wrong, why wrong, and why did the test writer choose those wrong answers).

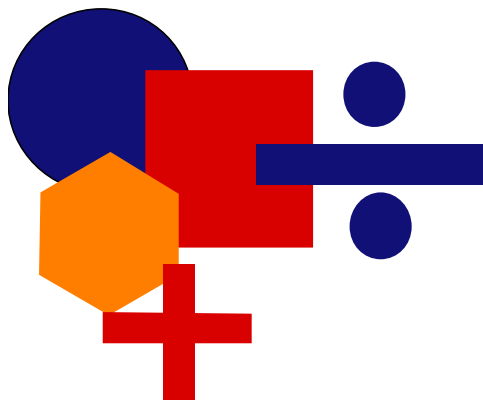
### STEP #2

The teacher *changes one element in the problem* and the class does it again. Repeat this 4-5 more times.

### STEP #3

Students form teams and *generate one more problem* just like the one they've been working on with the teacher. Each team sends a representative to the board to put their problem up for the rest of the class to solve. They *include 3 wrong answers* in imitation of the sample that they've just analyzed.

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## IV. TEST TAKING STRATEGIES: THE THINKING PERSON'S TEST PREP

### Test-Taking Strategies: Getting Credit for What You Know!

#### READING

- 1. Show Up!** Mentally and Physically!
- 2. Try!** But don't kill yourself!
- 3. Titles/  
Subtitles** Read and think about them.
- 4. Graphics** Look at the elements and relationships.
- 5. Skim!** Read the first and/or the last line of each paragraph.  
  
For 1 or 2 paragraphs, read the biggest word or a short phrase in each line.
- 6. Question  
~ Bounce!** Read the question carefully (2 times if necessary).  
  
Take your 50-50.  
  
Bounce back to the reading if necessary.  
  
Choose the best answer.  
  
Use the text, not your life, to answer the question.

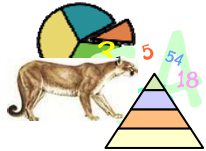
#### MATH

- 1. Show Up!** Mentally and Physically!
- 2. Try!** But don't kill yourself!
- 3. Graphics** Look at the elements and relationships.
- 4. Read the  
Question  
Twice!** Pick out the key elements or facts.  
  
Pick out the question.
- 5. Answer ~  
Bounce!** Estimate the correct answer.  
  
Bounce back to the question and the graphic as necessary.  
  
Take your 50-50.  
  
Work the problem if necessary.  
  
Choose the best answer.

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*A testing bookmark for reading and math testing follows*

## Predict



## Circle KEY words



underline



## Reading Test Taking Strategies

1. Read the title/subtitles. Predict (guess) what the passage will be about.
2. Carefully study any charts, graphs, diagrams, and pictures.
3. Read the questions and circle the key words. **MAKE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THE QUESTION IS ASKING.**
4. Read the passage carefully. Visualize what is being read.
5. Read the first question and answer choices to get an idea of what the answer may be.
6. Return to the passage and underline the clues that support the answer.
7. Return to the question and eliminate the wrong answers.
8. Plug and play answer choices to try them out.
9. Bubble in the best answer.

## Math Test Taking Strategies



$$\begin{array}{r} 10005 \\ +20005 \\ +30005 \\ \hline 6000++ \end{array}$$



1. Read the problem at least **twice**.
2. Pick out what's relevant. Change symbols to words and words to symbols.
3. Carefully study any charts, graphs, diagrams, and pictures.
4. Guesstimate the answer if possible.
5. Work the problem mathematically - if you know how - and any other way.
6. Eliminate the wrong answers.
7. Return to the problem and ask yourself why the correct answer is correct.
8. Plug and play answer choices to try them out.
9. Bubble in the best answer.

## IV. TEST TAKING STRATEGIES: THE THINKING PERSON'S TEST PREP

### Active Test Proctoring

Maximizing Student Performance on State Tests

#### It's best to proctor students you know.

If you're proctoring students you don't teach – and if time permits— take a few minutes to introduce yourself and get to know them before beginning. Set a positive, supportive, do-your-best tone.

#### Walk among students frequently during the test.

It helps students take the test seriously and stay on task.

#### Alert students to any problems they may be having:

Extraneous marks near bubbled answers, bubbles not filled in completely, misalignment in booklet and answer sheet numbers, mindless bubbling, etc.

#### Encourage students to work effectively:

"Pace yourself." "don't panic."

"Take a breather."

"Keep going."

"Keep up the good work."

"15 minutes to go."

"10 minutes to go."

"5 minutes to go."

etc.

Tests are designed to reflect what students do or do not know, not their anxiety, fatigue or ineffective work habits. Active test proctoring can ensure that scores will be as valid as possible.

Dennis Parker: [dp1018@pacbell.net](mailto:dp1018@pacbell.net)



### Children's Literature About Taking Tests

Cohen, Miriam (2006). *First Grade Takes a Test*. NY: Star Bright Books.

Finchler, Judy (2000). *Testing Miss Malarkey*. NY: Walker & Company.

Dr. Suess (1998). *Hurray for Diffendoofer Day!* NY: Alfred A. Knopf.

# V.TEST PREP OBSERVATION SHEET

Teacher Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Observer's Name \_\_\_\_\_

	Observed	Notes
<b>Basic Lesson Sequence</b>		
Display the item and determine which standard is being tested.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Demonstrate how to read the item and determine what the question is asking.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Note key test vocabulary terms in the directions or question.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have students work in pairs to select one correct and at least two incorrect answers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have students display their choices for each (white boards/thumbs up/down, signal cards with letters).	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Debrief the class on each answer to determine WHY a particular choice is right or wrong.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Add to chart of " <b>Test Taking Strategies</b> ".	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Add to list of <b>Test Vocabulary</b> terms if any new words come up.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Use strategies to make it interactive

- Students lead the discussion/lead at overhead.
- Use of signals to show answer.
- Pair share/group talk.
- Add to chart for test taking strategies/vocabulary.
- Game show format with points, teams, and bell signal.

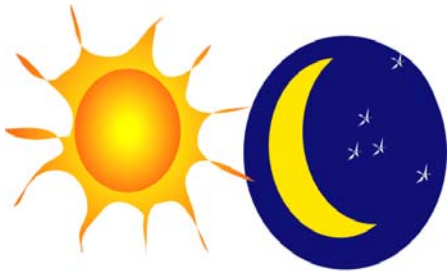
## Comments:

## VI. ACADEMIC VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

You can find academic word lists for ELA and Math on our website. Go to [www.knoxeducation.com](http://www.knoxeducation.com) for lists by grade level and subject that align with the CST.

### Academic Vocabulary Instruction

antonym (opposite)



Day	Night
Hard	Soft
Difficult	Easy
Messy	Neat

#### What is it?

The methods used to teach new vocabulary essential to academic success.

#### Why is it so important?

"Vocabulary reflects the amount of academic background knowledge you possess. There is a positive correlation between academic background knowledge and academic achievement."

Robert J. Marzano, 2004

"Children who grow up in homes impacted by poverty often enter school with far fewer words in their receptive and expressive vocabulary."

Hart and Risley, 1995

For full set of vocabulary word cards for testing and how to use them, see "Talking Walls: Building Classroom Environments to Support Student Achievement, 2009, by Michelle Karns and Charlotte Knox, [www.knoxeducation.com](http://www.knoxeducation.com). A CD with all word cards and other classroom materials is included with the book.

#### How does it apply in the classroom?

Effective vocabulary instruction requires careful planning.

- Select key terms that are aligned with standards
- Make agreements with grade level teams about coverage
- Design routines that can be built into the daily/weekly schedule

## VI. ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN STRUCTION



### Six Steps to Effective Vocabulary Instruction



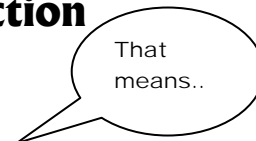
Use Illustrations



Restate



Demonstrate



Explain

1. The teacher provides a description, explanation, or example of the new term.
  - Use the illustrations in the story and additional visuals as needed to teach students the new concepts and words in English.
  - Encourage lots of choral response as you do this.
  - Don't assume that if one or two students know what something is, that the others get it.
  - Use 'Strategies for Comprehensible Input'.
2. Students restate the explanation of the new term in their own words.
  - Encourage group/paired discussion.
  - Use white boards.
  - Provide corrective feedback when students give incorrect explanation.
3. Students create a nonlinguistic representation of the term.
  - Illustrations may be: actual drawings, symbols, examples, or dramatizations of the term.
  - Model this process for students with your own doodles.
  - Use white boards so all students can get ideas from each other for ways to represent the term.
  - Encourage other nonlinguistic representations such as gestures, pantomime, and voice tone.
  - Students may also use the internet to search for additional graphics for the term.

## VI. ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN STRUCTION

4. Students periodically do activities that help them add to their knowledge of vocabulary terms.

- Find synonyms or antonyms.
- Engage in word webbing activities with pairs or small groups to add connections to the term.
- Learn the word in the students' primary language.
- Highlight a root, prefix, or suffix to help them remember the meaning of the term and relate that to other words they know with that chunk.

5. Periodically students are asked to discuss the terms with one another.

- Use "think-pair-share" techniques to have students review meanings, find agreements/disagreements, explain new information related to the term, etc.
- Have students revisit academic notebooks to find a word based on clues, and/or guess a word based on a graphic or brief definition.

6. Periodically students are involved in games that allow them to play with the terms.

**Pictionary:** provide teams with a common list of terms for review. Have teams assign an illustrator for their group. Have the illustrator pick a term at random to illustrate. The illustrator's team gets a set amount of time to guess the term as their teammate is drawing. If the team doesn't guess the correct team, the alternate team gets to guess and scores the point for that round. It is particularly effective to have teams use the class overhead for this.

**Guess my Group:** pairs take a list of terms and group them into categories of their own choosing. They cover these lists so that the other groups cannot see them. Next they begin reading their list until the others correctly name the category they were using for the group of terms. If the group cannot guess the category, then the team has to keep adding other words (not necessarily from the class list) to their group of words until the class names the category.

**Vocabulary Charades:** teams are given lists of words to act out and identify. The actor randomly draws one of the terms and acts out the word until his or her team guesses the term. You may want to keep score by counting how many terms they accurately identify in a set amount of time (1-5 minutes).

**Word Wizards:** challenge students to find the words you are focusing on in their independent reading, listen for them in conversations or on the TV, use them in their writing. Award points for each word documented with a source. Set a goal for 'Wizard' status and add an incentive to get there.

Marzano, R.J. (2004) *Building background knowledge for academic achievement: Research on what works in schools*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, pp. 91-103.

## VI. ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN STRUCTION

### Games to Play with CST Word Lists

#### Matching definitions:

Divvy out 1-3 words per student, have them write the word clearly on one index card and a simple definition + picture if possible on another (you can use the glossary in the back of Houghton Mifflin or Open Court for this). Have students use these cards to walk around and match up words and definitions with their classmates. You could also use the pairs of cards for playing concentration.

#### Crossword puzzles:

Here are a couple of websites that will let you create crossword puzzles. You may be able to get older students to create these for younger students based on the definitions they write up. I would AVOID USING WORD SEARCHES EXCEPT FOR WITH SPELLING ACTIVITIES--these do not encourage the student to think about the meanings of words. The students are just looking for spelling patterns.

<http://www.puzzle-maker.com/CW/index.htm>  
<http://thinks.com/webguide/crosswords.htm>

#### Guess my Group:

Pass out a list of academic terms that is not organized in any particular order. List 3 or more terms on the white board and ask students to work in teams to figure out what the words share in common with each other. For example you may list: *period, comma, apostrophe, quotation mark* (punctuation marks). Have each team or pair write the category on a white board and display all team responses at the same time. Teams with correct responses get a point. Teams may get additional points by adding another term that can fit the category. For example, to the above list they may add *exclamation point*. Review each term and why it fits in that category after each cycle. There will be varied responses to this. You can decide to give a point or not to the responses. For example, "about writing" may be too general when you were looking for "terms that explain how to revise".

#### Link words:

Have student choose two terms that are related from the list. They write one on one side of their white board, the other on the other side and indicate in the middle how they are related. For example *adverb and adjective* are parts of speech that describe another word.

#### Jeopardy

There are many templates available for creating jeopardy games on-line. You can also just use the index cards the students created for the matching definitions game above in a pocket chart.

<http://www.techteachers.com/jeopardytemplates.htm>  
<http://teach.fcps.net/trt10/PowerPoint.htm>

#### Bingo:

Have students make a game board with the terms. You give the definition and students have to find the word on their board.

#### Academic Vocabulary Notebook

Finally----it would be great to keep these words in mind all year long while you are building an academic vocabulary notebook with your students. Templates for logging in the terms all year for ELA and Math follows.

# VI. ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN STRUCTION

## English/Language Arts

The Word 	Your Definition (What does the word mean?) 	Your picture or symbol to help you remember 

# VI. ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN STRUCTION

## Math

The Word

Abc...

Your Definition  
(What does the word mean?)



Your picture or symbol  
to help you remember




## VII. FEEDBACK - STUDENT-TEACHER TEST CHATS

### 1. Explain "Grade Level" or "Proficient" using a graphic:

- A bell curve (for the CAT6)
- A rubric (for the state Writing Assessment in grades 4 & 7)
- Bars or bands (for the California Standards Test and the CELDT)

### 2. Review student's CAT6 and Standards data and identify outcomes in terms of:

- Grade Level (+/- 50<sup>th</sup> percentile or +/- "Proficient")
- Highest and lowest scores within content clusters or domains in Reading, Language, Math, Spelling, etc.

### 3. Review the student's gains or losses over the past 2-4 years and discuss reasons for such results:

- Was the student a "gainer," "sticker," or "slider?" In which areas?
- Note: the same percentile score or scale score two years in a row reflects one year's growth (e.g., 345 scale score in 2007 and 345 scale score in 2008= about one year's growth).

### 4. Set achievement targets for the upcoming test:

- Levels gain on the California Standards Test or CELDT
- Gain in percent correct on the district benchmark exams

### 5. Set content targets to support the achievement targets:

- Areas the student is going to work harder on to improve scores on the assessments: writing, homework, punctuation and grammar, word problems, multiplication tables, vocabulary, etc.

### 6. Discuss "Why try":

- To learn and get credit for what you learned.
- To practice for future high-stakes tests (driver's license, college, CPA, the BAR, the MCAT, the CBEST, etc.).
- "By the work, know the workman" = personal pride, develop a good track record in your "cum" file.
- Help your school

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# VII. FEEDBACK - STUDENT-TEACHER TEST CHATS



## English Language Arts Grade 4 **PASSPORT TO SUCCESS**

### CST

Advanced 394-600			
Proficient 350-393			
Basic 300-349			
Below Basic 268-299			
Far Below Basic 150-267			
Year	2008	2009	Goal for 2010

### DISTRICT BENCHMARK TESTS

71-100% Advanced	Test	1	2	3	4
	100				
70% Proficient	90				
	80				
40%-69% Strategic	70				
	60				
	50				
0-40% Intensive	40				
	30				
	20				
	10				

### MY GOALS FOR ELA

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

How will I achieve my goals?

•

During class time:

•

After School:

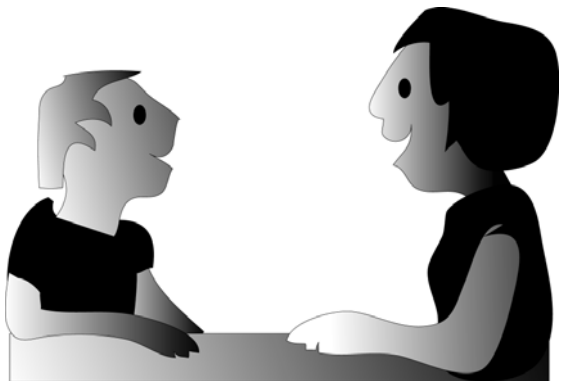
•

At Home:

•

*For more examples of test chat forms, see "Talking Walls: Building Classroom Environments to Support Student Achievement, 2009, by Michelle Karns and Charlotte Knox at [knoxeducation.com](http://knoxeducation.com)*

## VII. FEEDBACK - STUDENT-TEACHER TEST CHATS



### **Target Students: Helping Students Move from “Basic” to “Proficient”**

1. SMILE AT THE STUDENT DAILY MORE FREQUENTLY THAN USUAL.
2. TALK ABOUT SOMETHING DAILY NOT RELATED TO SCHOOL.
3. ASK EXTRA ACADEMIC QUESTIONS DAILY OF THE STUDENT, INCLUDING WAIT-TIME AND DELVING.
4. CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING AT LEAST ONCE AN HOUR.
5. STAND CLOSE TO THE STUDENT AT LEAST ONCE AN HOUR FOR AT LEAST A “THREE COUNT.”
6. PROVIDE AT LEAST ONE POSITIVE COMMENT TO THE STUDENT EACH HOUR EMPHASIZING EFFORT, PRODUCTION, OR OUTCOMES.
7. PROVIDE NEGATIVE FEEDBACK WHEN NECESSARY, ALWAYS FOLLOWED BY A MESSAGE OF “YOU CAN DO BETTER,” “TRY THIS,” OR “I’LL HELP.”
8. ASSIGN A JOB OR DUTY TO HELP YOU IN CLASS.
9. MAKE THE STUDENT A CROSS-AGE TUTOR (3-5 TIMES A WEEK) FOR STUDENTS IN A LOWER GRADE.
10. CALL HOME AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK WITH A POSITIVE COMMENT.

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## VIII. MOTIVATING PERFORMANCE AND EFFORT ON THE CST

### Motivating Best Possible performance on the CST:

#### Awards Assembly:

Conduct an awards assembly for previous year CST/CELDT performance which provides recognition for the following categories:

#### “Hall of Fame”

- All students scoring proficient or advanced.
- All students redesignated.
- Group these by categories: 350 and up, 400 club, 500 club, perfect 600 score.
- Consider trophies or a perpetual plaque for the students scoring a perfect 600.

#### “Rising Stars”

- All students with a scale score gain of 20 or more points (you can set the criteria)
- All students with a gain in a proficiency level (for example: below basic to basic)
- All students with a gain in CELDT level

#### Some tips from the field for making this work:

Consider providing medals or wrist bands for recognition instead of paper certificates. Encourage students to wear their medals or bands on special school spirit days or during the testing week.

Post the award winner names in a public place such as the front office or multipurpose room. Students and parents alike will enjoy seeing their names in print!

Invite parents and even the press to your ceremony. Add to the excitement with balloons, music, and photographs. A motivational guest speaker from the community may also build pride and encourage strong performance and effort.

In large schools, you may want to consider creating a PowerPoint® presentation of the names so that you may display the names quickly and have all students whose names appear on the screen simply stand for applause. They can receive their certificates or medals back in their individual classrooms.

#### Examples of awards stickers:



## II. MOTIVATING PERFORMANCE AND EFFORT ON THE CST

### Tips for improving testing performance from the Lighthouse Teachers:

*The Lighthouse Teachers is a group of teachers who had at least 70% proficient and/or 70% of their students increase in scale scores during the 2006-7 school year. They gathered at Dennis Parker's Ranch in May of 2008 to share their ideas for success.*

- Chart test taking strategies in kid friendly language with the students
- Have students make test strategy and motivational posters to decorate your room and cover up charts that need to get covered.
- Talk about the tricky test writers, beating the test, the evil test writer, read literature about taking tests, put it in perspective
- Make the test strategy lessons as fun and engaging as possible
- Create chants for the strategies with your students
- Use a game show format—students in teams (“numbered heads” assign 1,2,3,4 to answer, heterogeneous groups), use a bell to ring when ready, get an *easy* button from Staples, use white boards
- Use the same protocol for a testing environment for all tests all year such as setting up “offices”, test sign on the door, breathing, dedicating the test etc.
- Props: Test prep hats, test-taking glasses to hunt for clues, etc.
- Music, prizes, bouncy ball tossed to give answers
- Categorize the type of question it is: “right there” (underline) or Synthesis (circle)
- Attitude: play like a champion, slap the wall, “step up” don’t acquiesce, show your ‘strong side”

### Before Testing Week

- Provide a workshop for parents about how to help your child test best
- Organize healthy snacks and water to be distributed
- Create a Pep Rally/STAR Carnival, awards assembly, hit the ball out of the park --“600” club (see next page)
- K-1 students make encouraging posters for grade 2-5 classrooms “adopt a class”

### During Testing

- Dedicate your test to someone you want to make proud, who cares about you—do this on a post-it or note sheet to attach to the test.
- Take it slow—provide a space for students who want to take longer to complete the test
- Take a few moments for some breathing, movement, stretching, even back rubs
- Enjoy a little gum, peppermint candy canes, lemon drops
- Use brain strategy movements, across the mid line with large arm movements
- In grades 4 and up encourage use of highlighting, underlining, use of scratch paper to support problem solving and not just guessing
- Conduct a Spirit week during testing—lucky socks day, put on your thinking cap, etc.

*The Lighthouse Teachers and Charlotte Knox*

## IX. BACKWARDS PLANNING FOR THE CST

Meet in Grade Level Groups to review the Standards Blueprints for Language Arts and Math. (available at [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov) go to the STAR portion of the website and scroll down until you see "Standards Blueprints").

### Check Off Standards:

Check off standards in three categories (teachers may want to use 3 different colors of highlighters or a coding system):

1. I've taught this and most have mastered it (+)
2. I've taught this, but need to review it with all or some (√)
3. I haven't taught this yet (leave blank and calendar this)

### Work in Grade Level Teams:

- Check for calendar standards not yet addressed.
- Locate appropriate lessons/materials (Many reading series are correlated to the state standards and these documents are available on-line at the publisher's website or within the teacher's editions.)
- Plan appropriate homework assignments for review of previously taught skills.

### Back in the Classroom:

- Post the standards blueprints.
- Check off standards addressed in front of the students weekly.
- Preview standards to be addressed with students periodically to make sure they understand the skill/concept contained within the standard. (*a standard = something you know or can do*).

### With Parents:

Consider having a school-wide or individual grade level meeting to:

- Review the standards for the grade level.
- Make suggestions for ways to help at home.
- Discuss ways to lower stress and assure optimal performance during the testing week.
- Show them the released test items for the CST so they know what their child will encounter on test day.



# IX. Backwards Planning for the CST

Thoughtful Facilitation of Student Learning

**District Pacing Guides**

**Unwrapping the Standards**

**Choose Additional Standards**

Released Test Questions

Academic Vocabulary of the CST

Connect, if possible, to Priority Standards

Standards Tool Kit

Standards Tool Kit

See what makes sense with the textbook

or  
CDE website:  
[www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov)

or  
Knox Education website  
[www.knoxeducation.com](http://www.knoxeducation.com)

or  
CDE website:  
[www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov)

**Calendar, Plan, and Share Ideas**



**How are these standards taught in HM/OCR?**

**Unwrapping Additional Standards**

**Do we need to supplement?**

Released Test Questions

Academic Vocabulary of CST

**New Ideas?**

- *Supplemental materials*
- *Standards Plus!@*
- *Best practices from professional development*

Standards Tool Kit

Standards Tool Kit

or  
CDE website:  
[www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov)

Knox Education website  
[www.knoxeducation.com](http://www.knoxeducation.com)

or  
CDE website:  
[www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov)

# IX. Backwards Planning for the CST Planning Tools

## Standards Blueprints ELA Math

Standards  
Tool Kit

Knox Education  
website  
[www.knoxeducation.com](http://www.knoxeducation.com)

or

CDE website:  
[www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov)

## Academic Language of the CST

Standards  
Tool Kit

Knox Education  
website  
[www.knoxeducation.com](http://www.knoxeducation.com)

or

CDE website:  
[www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov)

## Released Test Questions

Standards  
Tool Kit

or

CDE website:  
[www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov)

## Formative Assessments ELA Math

District  
Benchmark  
Tests

Chapter Tests

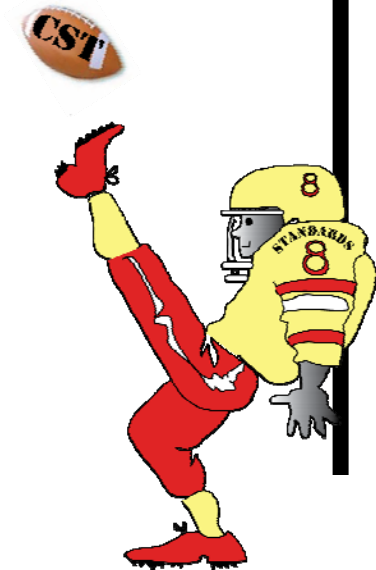
Teacher Made  
Quizzes

White Board Practice

## Pacing Guides

Adopted Textbook  
Teacher Guides

Standards Blueprint  
Check-Off from  
Classroom



# IX. BACKWARDS PLANNING FOR THE CST

Year \_\_\_\_\_

Week of	ACTIVITIES, PRACTICE ITEMS, PREPARATION
	<b>Staff Meeting to review Standards Blueprints</b>
	<b>Staff Meeting to check off Standards on Blueprints</b>

# IX. BACKWARDS PLANNING FOR THE CST

Year \_\_\_\_\_

Week of	ACTIVITIES, PRACTICE ITEMS, PREPARATION

# IX. BACKWARDS PLANNING FOR THE CST

Year \_\_\_\_\_

Week of	ACTIVITIES, PRACTICE ITEMS, PREPARATION
	<b>CST Testing Week</b>
	<b>CST Make-ups</b>
<i>Grade Level Shared Preparation Notes:</i>	

# IX. BACKWARDS PLANNING FOR THE CST

## Team Plan:

- ✓ Look over the list as a team.
- ✓ Plan out how much time you think you will need for each discussion.
- ✓ Think about which aspects you would like support with from Charlotte or others.

Time needed:	<b>Discuss the Students:</b>
When?	<b>Students at Basic for moving up to proficient:</b>
January	How are they doing <b>academically</b> right now? What kinds of things are we doing to increase <b>feedback</b> to these students?
February	<input type="checkbox"/> Test chats <input type="checkbox"/> Informal in-class comments
March	<input type="checkbox"/> Reviewing quizzes, assignments, writing, in small groups or one-on-one <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Support?	How are they doing in the <b>social-emotional</b> arena? What kinds of things are we doing to <b>support</b> them?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Buddies <input type="checkbox"/> Calls home <input type="checkbox"/> Positive feedback/appreciations
	<b>Students at Far Below Basic/Below Basic for intervention:</b>
	How are our interventions going? How do we know? Are the students who need tutoring getting it?
Time needed:	<b>Discuss the Blueprint Standards:</b>
When?	<b>Check-off standards:</b>
Support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We taught it and they got it (+)</li> <li>• We taught it, but need to review (✓)</li> <li>• We haven't taught this yet (-)</li> </ul> <b>Calendar standards</b> not yet addressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locate appropriate lessons/materials.</li> <li>• Look at the released STAR test items to see how the standard is tested and use that <b>academic language</b> when teaching the standard.</li> <li>• Plan appropriate homework assignments for review of previously taught skills.</li> </ul>
Time needed:	<b>Discuss Test Strategy Lessons:</b>
When?	1. <b>"Deconstruct"</b> each released test question <b>with the whole class using the "thinking person's test prep lesson format"</b> and the <b>4 WHY'S</b> .
Support?	2. <b>Chart testing strategies</b> your students are using as they come up in the context of these lessons.
Demo?	3. <b>Chart academic terms</b> used for testing in ELA and Math as they come up—class charts, illustrations and kid-friendly definitions, student academic vocabulary notebooks.
	4. Think about having a "mock test" 1-2 weeks before the STAR and debriefing that experience with the class.