

NeSA-ELA Secure Item Writing

Nebraska Department of Education

June 2015



WELCOME!

PLEASE ADD YOUR STICKER TO THE NEBRASKA MAP!
BE SURE TO GET SOMETHING TO EAT AND TO INTRODUCE
YOURSELF TO THE PEOPLE AT YOUR TABLE.



NeSA-ELA Secure Item Writing



Welcome!



Presenters



Nebraska Department of Education

Valorie Foy—Director of Statewide Assessment and Accountability

Jeremy Heneger—Assistant Director of Statewide Assessment

Tricia Parker—Director of Language Arts Education

Sharon Heater—Education Specialist/Liason to the Assessment Office

Data Recognition Corporation

Kara Courtney—Director of English Language Arts

Patrick Martin—Test Development Project Lead

April Ellwanger—ELA Test Development Specialist

NeSA-ELA Secure Item Writing



Where do you teach?

The logo for Nebraska State Assessment (NeSA), featuring the text "NeSA" in white on a red background that is shaped like the outline of the state of Nebraska.

NeSA

Training Agenda



- Security/Confidentiality
- Agenda for the Week
- Training
 - Quality of a Test
 - ELA Transition
 - Item Writing
 - Template Usage



Training Objectives



- 1) To gain understanding of the characteristics of a quality test
- 2) To gain understanding of the characteristics of a quality items
- 3) To gain understanding of Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK)
- 4) To cover the layout of the Table of Specifications (TOS)
- 5) To gain understanding of the electronic item template
- 6) To revisit bias and sensitivity issues



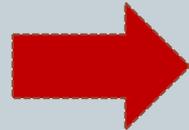
Training Objective #1



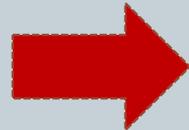
**TO GAIN UNDERSTANDING OF
THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A
QUALITY TEST**



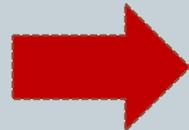
A Quality Test . . .



Validity



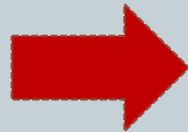
Reliability



Fairness



A Quality Test . . .

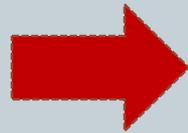


Validity

- Test *validity* refers to the degree to which the test actually measures what it claims to measure.
- Test *validity* is also the extent to which inferences, conclusions, and decisions made on the basis of test scores are appropriate and meaningful.



A Quality Test . . .

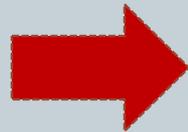


Validity

If a test is to be used to describe how well a school is conveying the knowledge and abilities of its students, the interpretation of the scores should be relevant and representative of that knowledge and those abilities.



A Quality Test . . .

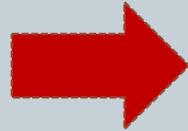


Reliability

- Test *reliability* refers to the degree to which a test is consistent and stable in measuring what it is intended to measure.
- Most simply put, a test is *reliable* if it is consistent within itself and across time.



A Quality Test . . .



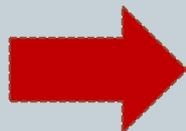
Validity and Reliability

How do we ensure that a test has validity and reliability?

- 1. Follow item-writing guidelines
- 2. Base items on the standards and TOS



A Quality Test . . .



Fairness

Do the test scores mean the same thing for any test participant regardless of subgroup membership?

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Socioeconomic Status
- ELL Status

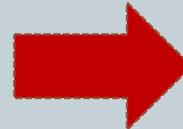
The logo for Nebraska State Assessment (NeSA), featuring the text 'NeSA' in white on a red background shaped like the state of Nebraska.

NeSA

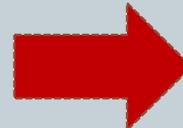
A Quality Test . . .



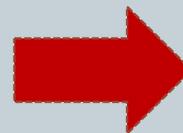
- accurately and appropriately measures what is relevant.
- is consistent and precise.
- does not put any group at a disadvantage.



Validity



Reliability



Fairness



Training Objective #2



**TO GAIN UNDERSTANDING OF
THE CHARACTERISTICS OF
QUALITY ITEMS**

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NeSA

ELA Transition



- New ELA Standards
- New Item Types
- Paired Passages

Old Standard vs. New Standard



Old 4.1.5.d

Identify semantic relationships (e.g., patterns and categories, homographs, homophones, synonyms, antonyms, multiple meanings)

New 4.1.5.d

Identify semantic relationships (e.g., synonyms, antonyms, homographs, homophones, multiple-meaning words) **to determine the meaning of words, aid in comprehension, and improve writing.**

Standards Activity

Unpacking the New Standards



Things to consider. . .

- What differences do you notice between the old and new standards?
- What similarities do you notice?
- How do these similarities and differences impact the items we write?

Passage Maps . . .



- are provided for each passage.
- suggest appropriate vocabulary, figurative language, and unique passage features.
- do not include *every* item opportunity in the passage.

For What It's Worth (N)

Context: *inhaling* (grade 8, EDL), *disregarded* (grade 8, EDL), *magistrate* (grade 9, EDL), *hyacinth* (not in EDL but context that this is a type of flower)

MMW: *head* (a person who is in charge*), *sporting* (to display or show off*)

Alliteration: heavenly hyacinths, lovely lilacs, radiant roses, luxuriant lavender

Affixes: dismissed, unfriendly/friendliest

Antonyms: compliment/complaint

Unique Passage Genre: This passage has characteristics of a folktale (teaches a valuable lesson).

Paired Passages



- Allow students to compare information across texts, which supports more-rigorous cognitive processing and provides students with an opportunity to show what they know and can do—not only within a text, but across the text.
- Support what may happen in the classroom. Students' understanding of the concepts or characters in a narrative about a historical event can be supported when the students read a journal from or an informational passage about the same time period.
- When studying a certain topic in an informational text, providing the students with multiple sources allows students to evaluate strengths and/or weaknesses of the sources. Again, mirroring classroom instruction and providing a rich opportunity for students.

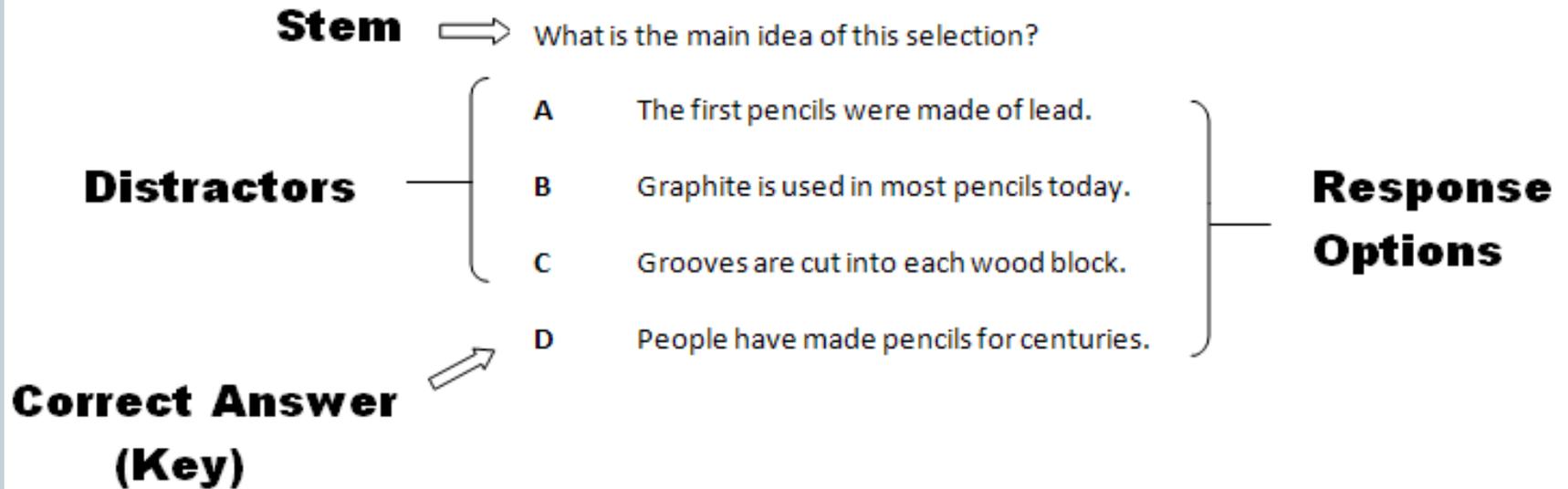
Marking Up a Passage



- **Step 1:** Read through the text and highlight key ideas or phrases that catch your eye.
- **Step 2:** Find ideas that align to standards like literary devices, figurative language, character traits, etc.
- **Step 3:** As you pull out information for your items from the text, highlight lines so you ensure coverage across the text.

Item Writing Terminology

Sample MC Item



Item Writing Guidelines

- Content
- Style
- Item Stems
- Response Options

Item Writing Guidelines	
CONTENT	Be clearly aligned to the identified indicator
	Do not reference material or information presented in another item
	Focus on one idea or concept
STYLE	Test meaningful content (ask questions worth asking)
	Spell out acronyms
	Avoid the use of "NOT" and "EXCEPT"
	Avoid absolutes (e.g., always, never) and vague modifiers (e.g., best, worst)
	Use appropriate vocabulary
ITEM STEMS	Ensure correct grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling
	Use active voice and present tense
	State clearly and concisely
	Use complete sentences with ending punctuation in context
	Question appears at the end of the stem
ITEM RESPONSES	Use <i>which</i> before a noun and <i>what</i> before a verb
	Do NOT use "Which of the following"
	Answer options should be grammatically consistent with the stem and parallel in form
	Mutually exclusive (independent)
	Phrase choices positively (avoid NOT)
	Do NOT use "All (or none) of the above"
All answer options should be free of clues to the correct answer	
Ordered purposefully (by length, alphabetically, etc.)	
All options are plausible	



Item Writing Guidelines: CONTENT



- Be clearly aligned to the identified indicator
- Do not reference material or information presented in another item
- Focus on one idea or concept
- Test meaningful content (ask questions worth asking)



Item Example: CONTENT



Which detail from the passage supports the idea that people continue to pan for gold?

- A. Now 150 years later, the mining operations have long since been abandoned.
- B. Gold rushes also took place in the present-day states of Colorado, Nevada, Montana, Arizona, New Mexico, Idaho, Oregon, and Alaska.
- C. Because the metal gets washed out of the mountains by water, a gold seeker looks for a stream.
- D. Gold-panning pans are still sold at sports stores and hobby shops.

LA 6.1.6.e Summarize and analyze an informational text and/or media using supporting details to explain the main idea.



Item Writing Guidelines: STYLE



- Spell out acronyms
- Avoid the use of “NOT” and “EXCEPT”
- Avoid absolutes (e.g., always, never) and vague modifiers (e.g., best, worst)
- Use appropriate vocabulary
- Ensure correct grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling
- Use active voice and present tense



Item Example: STYLE



In paragraph 11, what is the meaning of the word **properties**?

- A. things that are owned
- B. specific pieces of land
- C. capabilities or powers of a substance
- D. traits used to describe a thing or person

LA 6.1.5.d *Identify and use semantic relationships (e.g., multiple meanings, metaphors, similes, idioms, analogies, synonyms, antonyms) to determine the meaning of words, aid in comprehension, and improve writing.*



Item Writing Guidelines: ITEM STEMS



- State clearly and concisely
- Use complete sentences with end punctuation in context
- Question appears at the end of the stem
- Use “which” before a noun and “what” before a verb
- Do NOT use “Which *of the following* . . .”



Item Writing Guidelines: ITEM STEMS



Which information can be inferred from the title of the passage?

- A. Gold is found in small piles.
- B. Most hills are gold in color.
- C. Only large nuggets of gold can be found.
- D. Gold remains in some mountains.

LA 6.1.6.f Apply knowledge of text features to locate information and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of print and digital text.



Item Writing Guidelines: ITEM RESPONSES



- Answer options should be grammatically consistent with the stem and parallel in form.
- Mutually exclusive (independent)
- Phrase choices positively (avoid NOT)
- Do NOT use “All (or None) of the above”
- All answer options should be free of clues to the correct answer.
- Ordered purposefully (by length, alphabetically, sequence, etc.)
- Are all options plausible?



Item Writing Guidelines: ITEM RESPONSES



Which statement best explains how the author's purpose is achieved in the passage?

- A. By describing an important historical event and telling about one gold seeker's experiences, the author entertains the reader about gold mining.
- B. By using the example of a gold seeker, the author explains to the reader the process of how to mine for gold.
- C. By including historical details and a sequence of steps, the author informs the reader about the past and present of gold mining.
- D. By presenting a challenge to overcome, the author encourages the reader to keep trying to mine for gold despite obstacles.

LA 6.1.6.a *Analyze text to determine author's purpose(s) and describe how author's perspective influences text.*



Item Example



According to paragraph 7, which analogy is correct?

- A. Found is to discovered as material is to tool.
- B. Found is to discovered as material is to substance.
- C. Found is to discovered as material is to cloth.
- D. Found is to discovered as material is to idea.

LA 6.1.5.d *Identify and use semantic relationships (e.g., multiple meanings, metaphors, similes, idioms, analogies, synonyms, antonyms) to determine the meaning of words, aid in comprehension, and improve writing.*



Item Writing Exercise

Training Objective #3



**TO GAIN UNDERSTANDING OF
WEBB'S DEPTH OF
KNOWLEDGE**



Item Difficulty and Depth of Knowledge

Important Item Information:

- Key: A
- Indicator: LA 6.1.6.c
- Difficulty Level: Medium
- Depth of Knowledge: 2

Cognitive Demand

- The **kind of thinking** and level of thinking required of students to successfully engage with and solve a task
- The ways in which students **interact with content**



Reading DOK Levels



- DOK 1:** Recall answer literal questions, recall facts and details, simple understanding of a single word or phrase, slight paraphrasing
- DOK 2:** Skill/Concept describe cause/effect of particular event, identify and summarize the major events in a narrative, use context clues, predict a logical outcome
- DOK 3:** Strategic Thinking support ideas with details and examples, apply a concept in other contexts, explain or connect ideas



Same Verb—Three Different DOK Levels



DOK 1: Describe the features of a place.
(requires simple recall from text)

DOK 2: Describe the cause and effect of a particular event.
(requires comprehension and processing of text)

DOK 3: Determine the author's purpose and describe how it affects the interpretation of reading a selection.
(requires deep understanding of text and requires student to make connections)



Item Difficulty



Difficulty refers to how many students answer a question correctly.

“What is the definition of *exaggerate*?”

DOK 1 – recall

Most students can answer the question easily, and most will get it right.

“What is the definition of *altruistic*?”

DOK 1 – recall

Will the same number of students get the answer correct?



Training Objective #4



**TO COVER THE LAYOUT OF THE
TABLE OF SPECIFICATIONS**



Table of Specifications (TOS)



- Important to use TOS as a guide
 - Red-Tested Indicator
 - Highest DOK Level Tested
 - Item Total
 - Eligible Item Types



Training Objective #5



**TO GAIN UNDERSTANDING OF
THE ELECTRONIC ITEM
TEMPLATE**



How to Save Items



- Begin by doing a “save as” with the item template
- Save template in the folder on a flash drive named, for example, “Grade 3 NESAs Reading Group A”
- Begin each new indicator with “_1” and save each item that follows for that item sequentially
- Use the original item template with each new indicator



How to Save Items



LA6.1.5.d_1

- LA=subject
- 6.1.5.d=indicator
- _1=item number within the set

How to Save Items After Review



After review,
naming remains the same, but make sure
to “save as” in the folder marked **Final**.

*** Keep all work saved on the flash drives.**



How to Use the Template



Item Writer Information		Reference	
Item Writer Name	Name Here	Graphic Description #1	
Submission Date	6/1/2015	Graphic Description #2	
Item Information		Graphic Description #3	
Item Type	MC	Graphic Description #4	
Grade	3	Graphic Description #5	
Content Area	Reading	Delivery	Atch <input type="checkbox"/> Fax <input type="checkbox"/> Mail <input type="checkbox"/>
Subject		Permission Needed	
Set	NAS	Passage Title #1	
Goal 1	LA	Passage Title #2	
Goal 2	3	Temp Passage ID #1	
Goal 3	1	Temp Passage ID #2	
Goal 4	5	DRC Passage ID #1	123456
Goal 5	6	DRC Passage ID #2	
Secondary Set			
Secondary Cnt Codes			
Tertiary Set			
Tertiary Cont Codes			
Bloom's Taxonomy			
Cognitive Level			
Depth of Knowledge	2		
Est. Difficulty Level	Medium		
Focus	Context		
Graphics	NC		
Calculator	NC		
Points	1		

How to Use the Template



Comment	[]
Prompt / Stem	
[In paragraph 4, what is the meaning of the word anxious ?]	
Answer Options	
Key:	[D]
Option A. Rationale:	[] [selfish]
Option B. Rationale:	[] [hungry]
Option C. Rationale:	[] [hopeful]
Option D. Rationale:	[] [worried]
Other:	[]

Training Objective #6



**TO REVISIT BIAS AND
SENSITIVITY ISSUES**



Types of Bias



- **Stereotyping**
- **Gender Bias**
- **Regionalism**
- **Ethnic or Cultural Bias**
- **Socioeconomic or Class Bias**
- **Religious Bias**
- **Ageism**
- **Bias against Persons with Disabilities**



Topics



- Avoid topics that could be offensive or controversial
- Carefully consider what context is needed to meet the standard
- Think about all of our students when composing items



Questions to ask yourself as you write and review



- Do the items (questions and responses), passages, and graphics
 - demean any religious, ethnic, cultural, or social group?
 - unnecessarily portray any person or group in a stereotypical manner?
 - contain any other form of bias: gender bias, regionalism, ethnic or cultural bias, socioeconomic or class bias, religious bias, ageism, or bias against persons with disabilities?



Questions to ask yourself as you write and review



- Are there any topics that are not described clearly enough that might disadvantage a group of students for any reason?
- Are there any terms, difficult words, culturally specific concepts or ideas, figures of speech, jargon, or slang that might disadvantage a group of students?



THANK YOU!



QUESTIONS?

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