On November 16, 2017, the South Carolina Department of Education convened a panel of experts to review item data on the English 1 End of Course Assessment. The panel looked at items with a high percentage of students answering correctly and items with a low percentage of students answering correctly. The discussions of that panel yielded the following recommendations.

The panel recognizes the hard work of SC educators and offers the following as suggestions for ways to improve student success on the ELA SC READY assessment for English 1.

**Inquiry**

The panel recommends that during instruction, students should have practice developing, writing, and refining research topics and questions. Also, the panel recommends that teachers provide students with research opportunities that allow them to evaluate a variety of sources, determine the relevancy and credibility of those sources, and decide to either use or discard those sources. While the panel suggests that more instructional emphasis should be placed on the process of research rather than the product of research, they especially stress students’ ability to evaluate the credibility of sources as an area of weakness. Based on these areas of weakness, the panel recommends students receive more instructional guidance and practice:

- reading a scenario and then formulating a research question.
- reading a scenario and then determining how to narrow a research topic or broaden a research topic.
- evaluating sources for relevance, credibility, and validity.
- organizing and categorizing important information as it is related to a research topic or question.

**Reading Literary Text**

The panel recommends that students should have experience reading a variety of rigorous, complex, literary text types as recommended in the *South Carolina College-and-Career-Ready Standards for English Language Arts*. “By the end of English 4, students read four major types of literary texts in print and multimedia formats: fiction, literary nonfiction, poetry, and drama. In the category of fiction, they read the following specific types of texts: adventure stories, historical fiction, contemporary realistic fiction, myths, satires, parodies, allegories, and monologues. In the category of literary nonfiction, they read classical essays, memoirs, autobiographical sketches, and speeches. In the category of poetry, they read narrative poems, lyrical poems, humorous poems, free verse, odes, songs/ballads, and epics.”

In English 1, the panel recognizes that students need more instructional guidance and practice:

- providing implicit and explicit evidence.
- analyzing the development of a theme over the course of a text
- analyzing the impact of word choices on meaning and tone
Reading Informational Text

The panel recommends that students should have experience reading a variety of rigorous, complex, literary texts types as recommended in the South Carolina College-and-Career-Ready Standards for English Language Arts. “By the end of English 4, students read informational (expository/persuasive/argumentative) texts in print and multimedia formats of the following types: historical documents, research reports, essays (for example, social, political, scientific, historical, natural history), position papers (for example, persuasive brochures, campaign literature), editorials, letters to the editor, informational trade books, textbooks, news and feature articles, advertisements, journals, speeches, reviews (for example, book, move, product), contracts, government documents, business forms, instruction manuals, product-support materials, and application forms. They also read directions, schedules, and recipes embedded in informational texts. In addition, they examine commercials, documentaries, and other forms of multimedia texts.”

In English 1, the panel recognizes that students need more instructional guidance and practice:

- providing explicit and implicit evidence to support meaning
- analyzing the development of a central idea over the course of a text
- analyzing the impact of specific words and phrases on meaning and tone
- using context clues to determine meanings of words and phrases

Overview of Reading Literary and Informational Texts

The panel offers the following as suggestions for ways to improve student success with literary and informational texts in English 1.

- Literary Text Standards 9-12 and Informational Text Standards 8-11 fall under the key idea of Language, Craft, and Structure. The panel suggests that more instructional time be devoted to not just identifying text structures, but analyzing how the structure of a text relates to the author’s craft. In other words, the panel encourages teachers to focus more on the “how and why” of the standards. The panel identifies RI.8.2 as an area of concern for English 1 and recommends that instruction move beyond identifying the structures of informational text and focus on the impact of a text’s structure on an author’s ideas or claims.

- The panel recommends that more instructional focus be placed on the “how and why” of Reading Literary Text Standard 8. The panel notes that the “how and why” of this standard’s indicators is an area of concern for English 1. On the assessment, students may be asked to provide evidence showing how characters and plot are connected and developed.

- The panel recommends that more instructional focus be placed on the “how and why” of Reading Literary Text indicators 12.1 and 12.2. On the assessment, students may be asked to provide evidence showing how an author uses text structure to create tension in the plot. Students may also be asked to provide evidence of how the author uses the structure of a text to create different effects.

- The panel identifies RI.10.1 as an area of concern. The panel recommends that more instructional focus be placed on the “how and why” an author uses rhetoric. On the assessment, students may be asked to provide evidence showing how an author uses rhetoric to advance his purpose.
• The panel identifies RI.11.1 and RI.11.2 as areas of concern for English 1. The panel suggests that in English 1, more instructional time be devoted to analyzing how the author uses text features to support his ideas or claims. In addition, the assessment may ask students to determine whether or not an argument is valid and the evidence relevant to the author’s claims.

• The panel also recommends that analysis of text should be on-going through close reading of text and that teachers provide more opportunities for students to think through and talk through the analysis of text.

• The panel recommends that students be presented with multiple summaries of a text and be asked to evaluate each summary. On the assessment, students may be presented with several summaries of text and asked to select the best summary. The panel suggests that students have practice writing their own summaries and evaluating summaries written by others.

**Writing**

• E1.W1.1f, E1.W2.1h: develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, and rewriting.

The panel identifies “provide a concluding statement or section that supports the information presented” as an area of concern. Students may be asked to read a scenario and may then be presented with multiple concluding statements and asked to select the one that best supports the information presented.

The panel suggests that instruction should focus more on the process and quality of writing rather than the product of writing. In addition, the panel suggests that teachers provide students with more opportunities to think and talk before they write.

**Communication**

The panel identifies communication indicator E1.C.4.1 as an area of weakness and recommends that instructional time be devoted to teaching students to evaluate the “why and how” of a speaker’s use of rhetoric, point of view, and reasoning. For example, a student may be asked to analyze how a speaker uses rhetoric to impact the audience or convey his message. On the End of Course Exam, the communication indicators are assessed through the use of speeches. The panel recognizes that students need more instructional guidance and practice analyzing speeches.
General
The panel recommends that students have more exposure to and practice with the test item types that may appear on the English 1 End of Course assessment. These item types may be found at https://ed.sc.gov/tests/high/eocep/. In particular, the panel suggests that teachers provide students more practice with evidence-based selected response items (EBSR) and multi-select items.

- EBSR items are two part items that require students to “read a piece of text or passage and choose the best answer from the answer choices.” Students will then be asked to “support their response [to part A] with evidence from the text [Part B].” Sample EBSR items may be found in the Online Tools Training (OTT) on our website.
- Multi-select items are items that prompt students to select more than one correct answer. “The multi-select items may have 5 or 6 answer choices.” Sample multi-select items may be found in the Online Tools Training (OTT) on our website.

The panel also recommends that teachers more frequently incorporate the language of the South Carolina College-and-Career-Ready Standards for English Language Arts into routine classroom instruction and assessment.