



SC READY

ELA Grades 6-8

2024 Test Data Review Report

Introduction

Data Recognition Corporation and the South Carolina Department of Education Office of Assessment and Standards (OAS) convened a panel of content experts to review item data from the Spring 2024 administration of SC READY. The panel of content experts analyzed operational and field test items, including information about how students performed on each item. Based on their analyses, the panel offered the instructional insights and strategies in this document to support student learning.

Operational items on the Spring 2024 SC READY ELA assessment were aligned to the *2015 South Carolina College- and Career-Ready ELA Standards*. To be most useful for teachers, instructional insights and strategies based on operational items have been organized to align with the *2024 South Carolina College- and Career-Ready ELA Standards*.

The OAS recognizes the hard work of the panel and South Carolina educators and offers these relevant and useful suggestions for improving instruction as an addendum to those from previous years.

Informational Text Structure

Items requiring students to analyze informational text structure(s) appear to be difficult for many students. The committee recommends that teachers help students make connections between text structure and organization. Additionally, students should have support and practice making connections between text structure, organization, and an author's purpose. As applied to AOR.5.3, classroom instruction should provide students with opportunities to analyze how an author may strategically structure or organize a text to impact or persuade the reader.

The committee recommends these instructional considerations:

- The teacher should choose a persuasive text that illustrates more than one purpose the author is trying to achieve. For example, one section of the text may provide data or information to inform the reader about a topic. Another section of the text may then try to persuade the reader to feel or think a certain way.
- When analyzing for an author's purpose, start with a short excerpt that has a single purpose. Ask students to annotate, noting what the author's purpose is and what in the text shows that. Students should have the opportunity to work in small groups and discuss their annotations.
- Once students can successfully determine an author's purpose and clearly explain how they determined it, the teacher should add an additional piece of the text that illustrates a different purpose. Ask students to repeat the process.

- Once students can successfully work with small chunks of text, give students the full text showing multiple purposes. The discussion then should center on why the author has multiple purposes and how that affects the reader.

Revise for Clarity

In the middle-level grades, students are expected to “improve writing by... considering feedback from adults and peers and revising to improve clarity...” (ELA.C.5.1). Students tend to think of revision as an opportunity to correct errors instead of viewing it as an opportunity to seek and implement feedback to improve the clarity of their writing. The committee has several recommendations to help students revise their writing for clarity:

- Students should be provided with their own written pieces to revise or provided with other samples of written text that need revision.
- Provide a sample text(s) to students and ask students to read the text aloud. This can be done in a writing conference with the teacher or small groups. If students have difficulty understanding the text as written, there is a problem with clarity.
- Once students have determined problems with clarity, ask the students specific questions about what may be missing or unclear. For example, if a sentence states: “In the story, the author personifies Aidan’s baseball glove by calling it ‘he’ and describing how it ‘grabs a hold of the baseball...’ He makes it seem like it is on the field as part of the team.” If a student were to read this aloud, the question a teacher may ask is, “Who is *he* in the second sentence?” Through discussion, the teacher can help the student understand that while the pronoun *he* is intended to refer to the author, it seems to be referring to Aidan. The teacher can then talk through with the student how this lack of clarity might confuse the reader and how the student can revise to improve clarity for the reader.
- By allowing students the opportunity to read and revise in small groups or writing conferences, teachers can help students better understand the concept of clarity and can use this as a time to address comma rules, misplaced modifiers, etc....
- To help students better understand how to improve organization, teachers may wish to present sentence strips to allow students to manipulate the sentences until the organization is clear to the reader. This will also allow students to determine where and how to place transitions to connect ideas.

Research

The committee noted that items aligned with the Research indicators were among the more difficult items on the test, particularly for sixth-grade students. As with other indicators addressed in this document, the research indicators are good to tie back to an author’s purpose. Encourage students to think about the intended audience for a

potential source: Who is the author trying to reach? Who is publishing this work, and why? Some insights or strategies the panel recommends are:

- Review what *purpose* is: students need to know the focus of their written work as well as the purpose of the source they are reading.
- Students should start by focusing on what they want the audience to know, and then think about whether a particular resource will help them reach that goal. What questions might a reader have, and will using this resource help answer any of those questions?
- Create a “credibility checklist” or set up a rating system for potential sources (e.g., “most credible,” “best,” etc.). Ask students to consider whether a source might be (or appear to be) biased, and reinforce that bias might not be a “yes or no” question.
- Rank sources according to bias toward a particular viewpoint.

Alternative Perspectives and Counterclaims

In the middle-level grades, ELA.C.1.1 progresses from acknowledging an *alternative perspective* in Grade 6 to acknowledging a *counterclaim* in Grade 7, and then to acknowledging *and refuting* a counterclaim in Grade 8. Some strategies the panel suggests are:

- Practice anticipating alternative perspectives or counterclaims as you read argumentative texts in class, asking students questions such as “What would be the other side of this argument?” or “What could someone say against this argument?”
- Ask students to annotate text to help them find examples. (This can also help them think about an author’s purpose and structure.)
- Teachers might randomly pass out sets of claims and alternative perspectives or counterclaims, and task students with finding the student whose claim is their opposite. Once matched, students should have an opportunity to explain how they determined who was their opposite and why.
- Once students grasp the concept of claim and alternative perspective/ counterclaim as individual elements, add text. Create multiple stations. At each station, provide 5-8 sample paragraphs that each contain a claim and alternative perspective (6th grade) or a claim and counterclaim (7th-8th grades). Students will travel in small groups to each station. The teacher may wish to use a timer. While at each station, students will first work independently to determine the claim and alternative perspective/ counterclaim in each paragraph. Students should then have time to discuss their responses and come to a consensus before moving to the next station. Once all groups have visited each station, present one paragraph from one of the stations. The group at that station should then show

the class what they determined as the claim and alternative perspective/ counterclaim and explain why. Allow students to ask questions. Correct any misunderstandings. Each group should have the opportunity to explain at least one paragraph from their station.

- This can be extended for 8th-grade students by including paragraphs that contain refutations to the counterclaim.
- This can be extended for all grades by incorporating opportunities for students to determine evidence and reasons as well as claims and alternative perspectives/ counterclaims.

For additional support assessing the *2024 South Carolina College- and Career-Readiness Standards*, please review the [“2024 ELA Assessment Specifications for Teachers”](#) documents.