

Test Prep Strategies

Kristen Pennycuff Trent

ktrent@tnitech.edu

Hitting Reset on Testing: What We Know

- ▶ TNReady with Questar grades 3-8
 - ▶ ELA
 - ▶ Writing previously tested as Part I in February now folded into ELA assessment at end of the year; given in 4 shorter segments
 - ▶ Time reduction of 75-95 minutes of testing in ELA
 - ▶ Reduction of 120 minutes for End of Course assessment in English for secondary students
 - ▶ Science
 - ▶ Two subparts at end of the year
 - ▶ Multiple choice questions
 - ▶ Plans to redesign to constructed response.
 - ▶ Same as last year.
 - ▶ Assessment blueprints available online
 - ▶ Other resources such as sample test items available later.

Hitting Reset on Testing: What We Know

- ▶ “It has also been clear that there are some adjustments we already believe make sense for our final ESSA plan: **We plan to cut the TNReady science and social studies assessments in half for our students in grades 3-4.** Because there will be fewer questions on those two subjects, students’ scores will fall within only two performance levels, instead of the usual four on the other TNReady assessments. Additionally, there will be an increased focus on literacy in those grades, aligned with the state’s focus on reading, and new components will be included in the English language arts exam. However, these grade-level assessments will still be shorter overall, and we will continue to evaluate all of our options for streamlining assessments in the coming years, including in the 11th grade.”

- ▶ Retrieved from <http://tnclassroomchronicles.org/essa-feedback-leading-positive-changes-supporting-tennessees-future-success/>

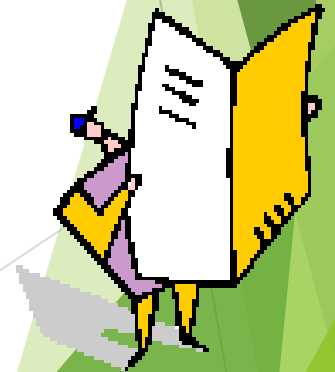
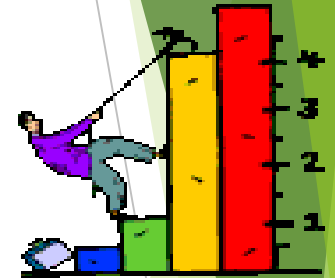
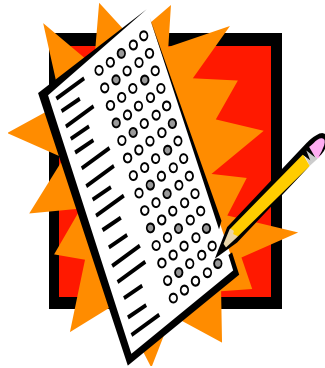
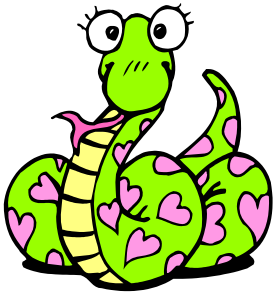
Hitting Reset on Testing: What We Know

- ▶ “The paring down of science and social studies exams might not necessarily translate to dramatic reductions in testing time because the department is beefing up the reading and language arts assessments. A state Education Department spokeswoman said it is unclear how time spent on testing will be impacted, but it could be reduced.
- ▶ Arlington Community Schools Superintendent Tammy Mason said she supports focused testing such as the announcement to target reading in third and fourth grades. The Memphis-area schools director added she also supports any testing time reduction.
- ▶ “I would say we need to be careful not to dwindle (testing) so much in every grade where we can't get a good picture of what kids know,” Mason said about reducing science and social studies testing. “But what we do know is that if kids aren’t able to read they aren’t going to be successful in science and social studies.”
 - ▶ Retrieved from <http://www.wbir.com/news/local/education/tennessee-to-trim-science-social-studies-testing-boost-reading-exams/413346916>



Test-Taking Strategies

Adapted from Matt Guffey, Longridge Elementary School



"Jail" the Detail!

- ▶ Highlight, underline, or circle the details in the questions. This helps you focus on exactly what the question is asking you to do.

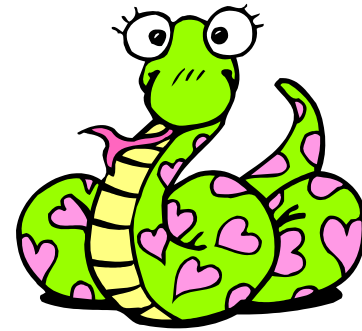
Mr. Detail



Be Slick and Predict!

- Predict what the answer is **BEFORE** you read the choices.

“I think the answer is ...”



Slash the Trash!

- Read ALL of the answer choices! Eliminate any choice(s) that you know are not the correct answer. The choice is obviously “trash!”



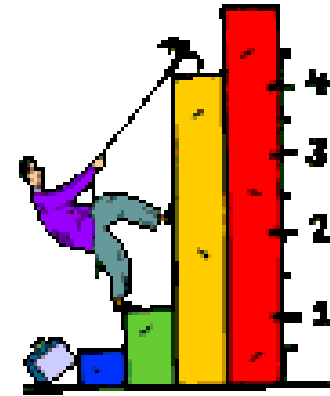
Plug it in, Plug it in!

- Once you have chosen your answer, plug it in and make sure that it makes sense! (This works really well with vocabulary questions).



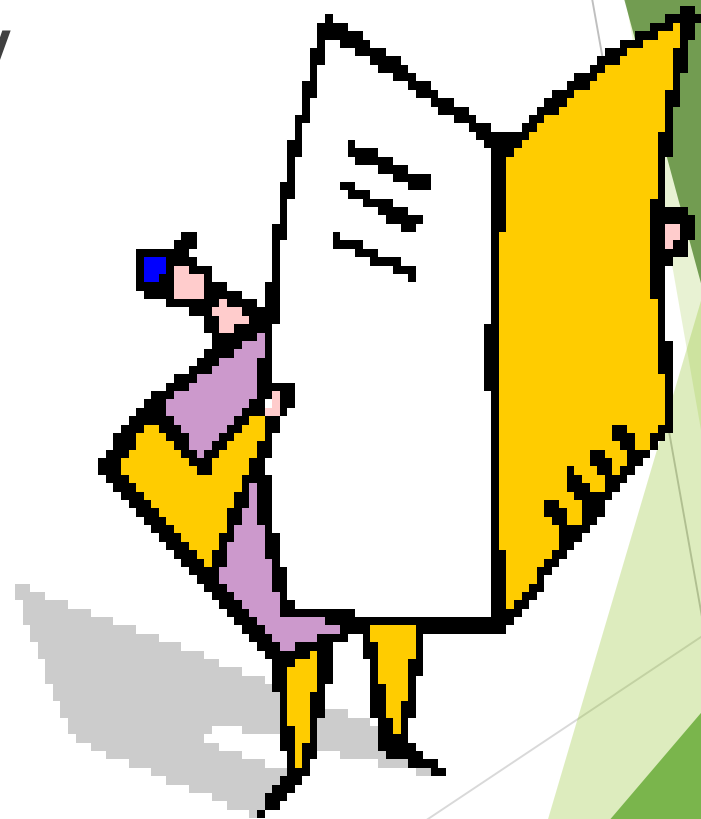
Be Smart With Charts & Zap the Maps!

- ▶ Charts and Maps provide information that you can use to answer questions! Analyze **ALL** information provided before answering the questions!



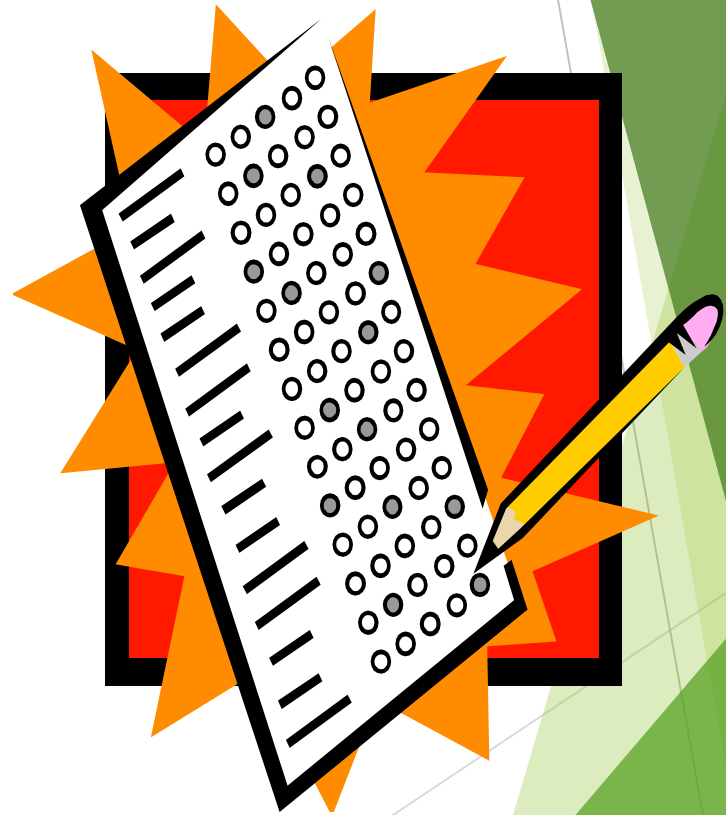
Extra! Extra! Read All About It!

- If the directions say read.... READ! Pay close attention to signal words in the directions, such as *explain*, *interpret*, and *compare*.



Be a Whiz...with the Grid!

- Beware! If the answer is not bubbled in exactly right...
YIKES! It will be wrong!



Keep On Keeping On!

- If you get to a couple of questions that you just don't know, don't give up! Keep trying your best!



If you SNOOZE, You will LOSE!

- ▶ Don't leave a question unanswered. You will not have ANY chance of getting it right.



“UNPACK” the Question!

Underline key words

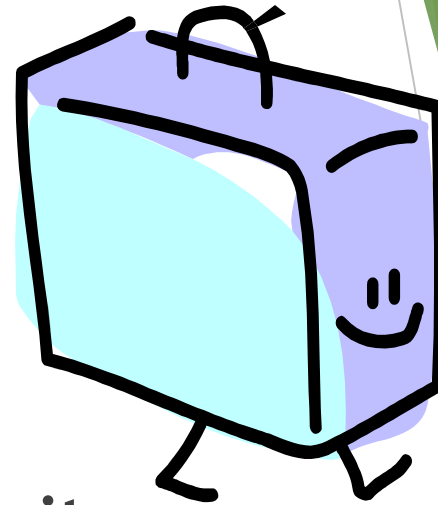
Number the parts of the ?

Plan how you will answer

AnsWER using specific details

Check off each part as you do it

Keep up the great work



Check It Out!

- ▶ When you have completed the test, go back and check your work!



Seven Ways to Support Students with Constructed Response

Adapted from *Teaching to Inspire*
Jennifer Findley

1. Discuss the constructed response question(s) before reading the text and have students highlight the evidence that will help them.

- ▶ Works with both mentor text read-alouds and independent practice.
- ▶ Prior to read, focus on what students are expected to do after reading.
- ▶ Individual copies of the prompt are needed.
- ▶ If reading aloud a mentor text without individual copies for students, have them keep a post-it note to jot down evidence as you read.
- ▶ If students have individual copies, they can highlight the evidence that they will need to refer back when answering the question.

2. Read the text and discuss it as a class in depth.

- ▶ To scaffold effectively, use a common text that all students can read independently.
 - ▶ Mentor text read-aloud at first, then independent passages.
- ▶ Do a close read and annotate.
 - ▶ Read with a pencil or thinking marks.

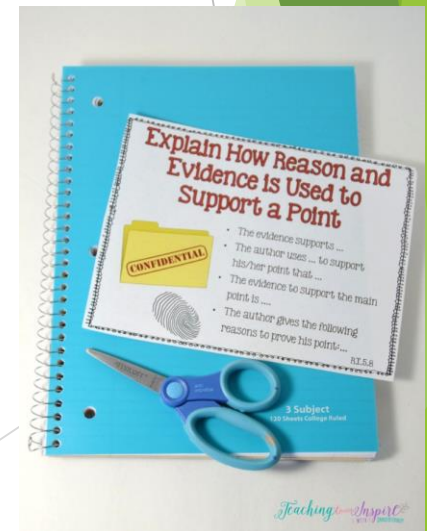
Annotation Notes: Read with a Pencil

- Underline major points using pen or pencil.
- Circle keywords and phrases that are confusing or unknown to you in either pink or orange.
- Use an **exclamation mark** for things that surprise you and briefly note what it was that caught your attention. **!**
- Use a question mark for things/questions that you are wondering about during the reading. Be sure to write your question. Use your **yellow** marker. **?**



3. Provide sentence stems for students to use in their responses.

- ▶ Start with an anchor chart.
- ▶ Give students a permanent reminder: a bookmark, a notebook post, etc.
- ▶ Encourage students to use the sentence stems in their oral rehearsal as well as their individual writing.



4. Use a word bank of suggested or required words for students to use in their response.

- ▶ Include both academic and content vocabulary.
 - ▶ Analyze (break down)
 - ▶ Main Idea (the most important thing that happens to the who or what in the passage)
 - ▶ Key Details (how you know the most important thing that happens)
- ▶ Model how to find the words in the question and the text that need to be included.
- ▶ As students become more familiar, brainstorm as a class 3-5 words that would need to be included.
- ▶ When students are writing, ask them to underline the words from the word bank that they used.

5. Have students orally rehearse their responses to a partner before writing.

- ▶ Give students 1-3 minutes to gather their thoughts before they share with a partner.
 - ▶ Partner 1 Share
 - ▶ Partner 2 Share
 - ▶ Compare and Contrast Responses
 - ▶ Begin Writing

RACE

to the finish line!

R

Restate the question using a sentence format.

A

Answer all parts of the question completely.

C

Cite evidence from the text that supports your answer.

E

Explain how the evidence you cited supports your answer.

6. Add in movement to engage the students while they are responding.

- ▶ Post 4-5 constructed response reading questions around the room.
- ▶ Send small groups of students to each station.
- ▶ Read the text together or have students read with partners or independently.
- ▶ Students rotate at your signal to answer questions on a piece of paper.

7. Have students color code the different parts of their response.

- ▶ Have students use a different colored pen or pencil for each part of a quality response:
 - ▶ Answer in complete sentences.
 - ▶ Evidence from the text.
 - ▶ Explanation of how the evidence supports your answer.



How Do I Evaluate Constructed Responses?

Constructed Response Rubric		Name: _____		
		Date: _____		
Score: 0	Score: 1	Score: 2	Score: 3	Score: 4
Answer is incorrect or does not match the question.	Answer shows only minimal understanding and/or does not truly answer the question.	Some parts of the question are answered correctly.	All parts of the question are answered correctly.	All parts of the question are answered correctly and show an in-depth understanding or sophisticated interpretation of the text.
	Evidence provided does not match the question or is irrelevant.	Some evidence is provided to support the answer.	Provides most of the key evidence needed to support the answer.	Provides all of the key evidence needed to support the answer.
Comments: _____				

© Jennifer Trickey

Questions? Comments?