



Office of Assessments, Analytics, and Accountability

LEAP English Language Arts Practice Test Guidance

Purpose

When determining how to use the LEAP practice tests, keep in mind that they are intended to be used as an instructional tool. They are **not** intended to replace curriculum-embedded assessments; instead, they are meant to be used in tandem with effective classroom instructional evaluation practices. This document includes recommendations on how to incorporate the practice tests into the rhythm of the classroom and use them as a complement to the curriculum. The guidance includes the following sections:

Contents

Purpose.....	1
How to Use and Not Use	2
Interpreting and Using Results	5
Item Types.....	6
General Practice Test Structure	7
Accessing the Practice Tests	7
Administering and Scoring the Practice Tests	8
Resources.....	10

October 2024

Louisiana Department of Education

doe.louisiana.gov | P.O. Box 94064 • Baton Rouge, LA • 70804-9064

How to Use and Not Use

The recommendations and cautions that follow are meant not only to help prepare students for the LEAP administration, but to help teachers better understand key ELA expectations and to help administrators better understand what should and should not be done with the practice tests.

General Use	Specific Guidance	How To Use	How Not To Use
<p>Examine practice test CONTENT to evaluate instruction.</p>	<p>Think about how to help prepare students for the complex tasks presented on the practice tests by examining your instructional materials and strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice the integrated approach of the tasks (reading, writing, language skills taught through a set of related texts) and compare to your lessons/units. • Make sure you are building the skills and knowledge necessary for students to be independent readers and writers; include a variety of instructional strategies, many of them focused on the importance of discussion in helping students make meaning of a text before they express their understanding in writing. • Compare instructional texts to the texts on the practice test: Are the texts varied (both literary and informational) and rich enough to support the standards, meaningful discussion, and text-based writing activities? Do the texts represent a range of complexity levels? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid lessons where reading, writing, and language skills are not connected (e.g., reading a story but writing in a journal about a personal experience completely unrelated to the story). • Avoid having students respond to full-length tasks similar to the tasks on the practice tests before students are prepared (e.g., don't ask students to write complete essays about two literary texts when they struggle to discuss the main idea of one text). • Avoid moving too quickly and leaving behind struggling readers; avoid spending too much time on one text and losing student interest. • Do not limit the types of texts taught in class based on the texts on the practice tests (e.g., teaching only short passages, rather than novels, or texts that have only the same themes or topics as the practice test texts; not teaching poetry if not on practice test).
<p>Examine practice test CONTENT to evaluate instruction.</p>	<p>Use as a basis of comparison for purchased and open-source assessments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine classroom assessment materials and ask questions, such as: “Do my assessments support an integrated approach that is reflected in the tasks on the LEAP 2025 practice test?” “How can I revise a pre-made assessment to meet rigorous expectations?” • Use in conjunction with Instructional Materials Review Resources provided by the LDOE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid limiting instructional content based on specific items on the practice test (e.g., teaching/assessing only the standards represented or only as they appear in practice test items). • Avoid limiting instructional strategies to only those required for the practice test (e.g., writing only under timed circumstances, designing assessments with only two-part questions, etc.).

General Use	Specific Guidance	How To Use	How Not To Use
	<p>Examine LEAP rubrics and use the Scoring Activity to better understand expectations for written responses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Scoring Activity with fellow teachers and with students to practice using the LEAP ELA rubrics or other instructional rubrics to identify qualities of writing that meet grade-level standards. • Use the Scoring Activity to score responses to practice test writing tasks. • Use LEAP 2025 rubrics when scoring student writing in response to instructional tasks. • Refer to the ELA Guidebooks 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12 Curriculum Guides for general information about how to use rubrics and the specific Teaching Guide of each unit for more targeted writing guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid focusing on superficial concerns when scoring (e.g., number of paragraphs rather than development of ideas; number of quotes versus quality of evidence; formatting over content). • Avoid focusing only on the qualities of the responses with the highest scores; instead, find positive qualities at every score point to help students identify their individual strengths and weaknesses. • Avoid focusing on only one part of the rubric, especially organization or word choice, especially if students are not able to express their understanding and knowledge of texts they are writing about.
<p>Examine practice test FORMAT to design classroom assessments that use similar features.</p>	<p>Consider sequencing and structure of instructional tasks and passage sets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build lessons that order questions in a purposeful way to support building knowledge. • Sequence questions so they build understanding and lead to a culminating writing task. • Create questions that focus on essential vocabulary (with sufficient context) and key ideas that are supported by textual evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid asking students to read without first knowing the focus or purpose of that reading, based on the grade-level standards, and how the reading builds on the previous reading and sets students up to be able to accomplish the next reading. • Avoid asking students to study vocabulary lists that are unrelated to classroom texts.
	<p>Integrate item types into daily instruction and assessments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create task-driven assessments that integrate reading, writing, and language skills. • Simulate EBSR and MS items during discussion to focus on the understanding behind the item types (e.g., ask one student to identify two different traits of a complex character and another student to provide evidence). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid tests with discrete writing prompts (not text based) and discrete grammar skills (no application). • Avoid using the same format for all questions, especially when helping students build content knowledge (e.g., asking students to answer only two-part items when a short-answer question might be more appropriate to elicit understanding).

General Use	Specific Guidance	How To Use	How Not To Use
<p>Simulate some TESTING CONDITIONS to help students feel prepared for the test administration.</p>	<p>Set time limits on some writing assignments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As you work through all parts of the writing process to build writing fluency, note the time needed for each part of the process. Consider how to compress the process during testing (e.g., focus on planning and gathering evidence). Practice timed writing by administering one task from the practice test, especially one that relates to a unit from the ELA Guidebooks or another high-quality curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not overwhelm students by being overly focused on testing time. Instead, focus on building reading and writing fluency so students have something to write about when responding to text-based writing tasks. Do not administer the entire practice test in a single day: Choose to administer only part of the practice test or administer the tasks and passages over the course of the school year as they fit into your curriculum. Avoid altering classroom and school schedules to administer the practice test.
	<p>Find different ways to expose students to test format — Computer-Based Testing (CBT) or Paper-Based Testing (PBT).</p>	<p>CBT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide multiple opportunities for students to work through the Online Tools Training (OTT), available here using the Chrome browser. Create lessons that have students focus on a particular tool in the OTT and the best way to use that tool efficiently and appropriately (e.g., using highlighting tool to mark relevant evidence in the texts and key words in the writing task to prepare for responding to the PCR; using the scroll bar to read through all parts of the EBSR and MS items). <p>PBT (grade 3 only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have students mark reading passages and test questions (annotate texts with purpose, highlight evidence, mark key words in directions/questions). Incorporate ancillary test materials into lessons (scratch paper, highlighters). Have students note skipped test questions on scratch paper to remind them to return to those questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid spending too much instructional time on test-prep; instead, focus on building the knowledge and skills students need to be independent readers and writers. Avoid overwhelming students with test-taking strategies, especially in the days prior to the assessment; instead, incorporate the analysis of classroom assessments into daily instruction (e.g., have students discuss the wrong answers they chose on a classroom assessment to discover their level of understanding).

Interpreting and Using Results

The LEAP practice tests are intended to be used as an instructional tool and **not** to predict student performance on the summative tests. The practice tests should **not** be used to place students in achievement levels. Assessing student performance in this way would not yield valid results. The practice tests are designed to provide students and teachers a look at the different item types on the summative assessment and are **not** inclusive of all content covered by the [Louisiana Student Standards for ELA](#).

When analyzing student performance on the practice test, do **not** make assumptions about a student’s score (i.e., 70% equals a D). To interpret the results of the practice test in this way would be inaccurate. Unlike classroom tests, statewide assessments are not scored on a grading scale where, for example, answering 95% of questions correctly is always an A or answering only 40% of questions correctly is always an F.

Instead of focusing on individual student performance, consider general patterns, such as those presented in the table that follows, and how to best address those issues in classroom instruction.

Areas to Consider	Example of Pattern	Recommendations
Key ELA Skills	Students struggle (or do very well) with specific skills associated with standards (central idea, structure of text, point of view, etc.)	Address weaknesses as you work through instructional lessons. Build connections between standards students are having success with and the standards creating issues for students (e.g., showing connections between character’s actions and theme).
Specific Types of Questions	Students struggle with two-part or multiple-select items	Have students create two-part and/or multiple-select items and discuss them in groups. Carefully discuss each answer option, asking students to explain the correct answer and why the other options are incorrect.
Evidence	Students struggle with providing appropriate evidence in written responses	Make sure that you are asking students to provide evidence in class discussions and when writing about texts. Discuss quality of evidence by using rubric language (<i>relevant, text-based</i>).
Different Types of Texts	Students miss more questions attached to literary texts than informational texts	Examine the literary texts on the practice tests and make sure that students are encountering literary texts in class with the same level of difficulty. Expose students to all kinds of literature (poetry, drama, short stories).
Different Types of Tasks	Students create expository responses to the PCR attached to the Narrative Task	When going through literary texts in your high-quality curriculum, discuss specific narrative techniques and offer opportunities for students to write stories.
Rubric Elements	Students seem to struggle with a key element of the rubric (development of ideas, organization of ideas, conventions)	Determine student’s level of understanding when reading texts before focusing on specific writing elements. Refer to 3-5 , 6-8 , and 9-12 Curriculum Guides for general guidance and the Interactive Supports for help in identifying target areas for instruction. Use Scoring Activity with students.

Item Types

Consider how to approach each of the possible item types: evidence-based selected response (EBSR), multiple select (MS), technology enhanced (CBT only), and prose constructed response (PCR). The chart below describes each item type and how it is scored.

Item Type	Description	Scoring Information
Evidence-Based Selected Response (EBSR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two-part item Part A measures reading comprehension Part B asks for evidence to support Part A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worth up to two points (2, 1, or 0) Full credit (2 points): both parts correct Partial credit (1 point): Part A is correct; Part B is not correct No credit (0 points): only Part B is correct or neither part is correct
Multiple Select (MS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires more than one answer (number of correct answers in boldface) Can have one part (e.g., asks student to select three summary details) or two parts (e.g., Part A asks to choose two themes; Part B asks for evidence for themes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worth up to two points (2, 1, or 0) Full credit (2 points): All answers correct Partial credit (1 point): for one-part MS item, 1 of 2 or 2 of 3 answers are correct or for an EBSR with MS in Part A, 1 of 2 or 2 of 3 answers in Part A are correct OR all answers are correct in part A, but Part B is incorrect No credit (0 points): When MS is in Part A, 0 of 2 or only 1 of 3 required answers are correct; when MS is in part B, EBSR rules apply: no credit if part A is incorrect.
Technology Enhanced (TE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May have one part or be part of an EBSR item Types: Drag and drop; drop-down menu; highlighting words, phrases, or sentences; match interaction within a table (refer to LEAP Technology-Enhanced Item Types for more information) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worth 2 points (2, 1, or 0) TE Items that are part of an EBSR follow the same general rules as EBSR items. Full credit (2 points): all correct responses — whether one or two parts — and ordered correctly, if required, OR if item includes six or more responses, full credit when student chooses all or nearly all correct responses (number of correct responses minus 1) Partial credit (1 point): depends on item type <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For most one-part TE items: 1 point if student chooses at least half of the correct responses For TE items that require paired responses: 1 point when student chooses at least half of the correctly paired responses For TE items that require ordering (e.g., steps in a process): 1 point when a student correctly orders more than half of the correct responses For summary items that include at least two extra options (e.g., 6 summary details, but student has to choose and order 4 correctly): 1 point when student chooses all of the correct responses but does not place them in the correct order OR when student correctly orders more than half of the correct responses No credit (0 points): does not meet partial credit rules, or for a two-part TE item, only part B is correct

General Practice Test Structure

Specific information about the test structure by grade level/course are included in the LEAP Assessment Guides in the LDOE [Assessment Guidance Library](#).

On the LEAP operational tests for **grades 3-8**, there will be **three** sessions, and students will respond to **only one** of the three types of writing tasks – **either** the Research Simulation Task (RST) **OR** the Literary Analysis (LAT) **OR** the Narrative Writing Task (NWT) – but the ELA practice tests include **four** sessions and all **three** writing tasks (LAT, RST, and NWT). This allows students to practice all types of writing.

On the LEAP operational tests for **English I** and **English II**, there will be **three** sessions, and students will respond to only **two** of the three types of writing tasks – the Research Simulation Task (RST) **AND** the Literary Analysis (LAT) **OR** the Narrative Writing Task (NWT), but the ELA practice tests include **four** sessions and all **three** writing tasks (LAT, RST, and NWT). This allows students to practice all types of writing.

LEAP ELA PRACTICE TEST DESIGN		
Session	Contents of Session	Practice Test Timing
Session 1	Literary Analysis Task (LAT) by itself (grade 3) LAT with a reading passage set with one text (grades 4-10)	75 minutes (grade 3) 90 minutes (grades 4-10)
Session 2	Research Simulation Task (all grades)	75 minutes (grade 3) 90 minutes (grades 4-10)
Session 3	Narrative Writing Task and a reading passage set with one text (grade 3) Narrative Writing Task and a reading passage set with one text or a pair of related texts (grades 4-8)	75 minutes (grade 3) 90 minutes (grades 4-10)
Session 4	Reading Literary and Informational Texts with one or two reading passage sets	30 minutes (grades 3-5) 50 minutes (grades 6-10)

Accessing the Practice Tests

The [Practice Test Quick Start Guide](#) provides information about test administration, scoring, and reporting. Use the links in the table below to access the grades 3 and 4 paper-based practice tests and grades 3-8 answer keys. These resources and all accommodated forms and materials are available in the [Practice Test Library](#) and the [DRC INSIGHT Portal \(eDIRECT\)](#).

Grade/Course in ELA	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	English I	English II
Computer-Based Resources	Answer Key	Answer Key	Answer Key	Answer Key	Answer Key	Answer Key	Answer Key	Answer Key
Paper-Based Resources	Practice Test and Answer Key							

The computer-based practice tests for grades 3-8, English I, and English II are available in INSIGHT. Teachers may access the online practice tests by copying and pasting the following link into Google Chrome: <https://wbte.drctdirect.com/LA/#portal/la/510848/adminId=510848>. The table below contains the user names to log into teacher access; **the password for all grades/courses and content areas is teach2025.**

Grade/Course in ELA	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	English I	English II
Username	ela03	ela04	ela05	ela06	ela07	ela08	eng1	eng2

Administering and Scoring the Practice Tests

The [eDIRECT User Guide](#) provides directions on how to prepare for the online administration of the practice tests. The computer-based practice tests are scored using a combination of automated and teacher scoring. Selected-response items (EBSR, multiple select, and technology enhanced) are automatically scored by the online system, while written responses are scored by teachers. The [eDIRECT User Guide](#) explains how teachers access and use the Educator Scoring application in the DRC INSIGHT Portal (eDIRECT) to score student responses to the PCRs. Prior to using the Educator Scoring application, teachers should retrieve the scoring rubrics from the answer key documents, found in the [Practice Test Library](#) or in the DRC INSIGHT Portal (eDIRECT) – available in the General Information tab under Documents. All items on the paper-based practice tests are scored by teachers using the paper-based practice test answer keys. Additionally, the [eDIRECT User Guide](#) outlines how to access the reports and explains the reports provided.

SCORING ACTIVITY

One or more of the writing tasks ([PCRs](#)) connected to the LAT, RST, and NWT on the practice tests do not include student work, so we recommend that teachers use the scoring activity on the next page to develop their own scoring materials. This activity, when done with a group of teachers who teach the same grade level/course, can be invaluable. By analyzing the rubrics, choosing papers at each score point, and discussing the scoring of student papers collaboratively, teachers not only gain a better understanding of grade-level writing expectations, but they discover students' strengths and weaknesses and how they might be addressed within their own classroom or within their schools or districts.

This same activity can be used with students as well. By having students work through the scoring process, they learn so much about what is expected, and they see the rubric in action as they score and discuss other students' papers. Often the discussion turns out to be the most valuable part of the activity and takes hold in a way that looking at sample responses from another source could never achieve. We also encourage school and district leaders to incorporate the scoring activity into their professional development or to at least set aside time for teachers to engage in the kind of discussion about student work that is at the heart of the scoring activity.

SCORING ACTIVITY: SCORING STUDENT WRITING USING RUBRICS

PURPOSE:

- To establish common expectations for student writing

OUTCOMES:

- Learn to use a writing rubric and identify qualities of writing that meet standards
- Reveal grade-specific expectations in a school
- Learn about and discuss different approaches that can improve instruction

PROCESS:

1. Have students respond in writing to a common prompt. Suggested prompts:
 - a. Tasks from [ELA Guidebooks](#) or other high-quality curriculum
 - b. Prompts on the LDOE practice tests or LEAP 360 interims, [Released Items](#), [In Common Prompts](#), etc.
 - c. Tasks created at the school/district level
2. Collect students' written responses to the common prompt.
3. Work collaboratively to understand the rubric.
 - a. Review the scoring criteria on the chosen rubric. Read through each row. Highlight the key words on the rubric that show the differences between each score.
 - b. Create anchor papers for each score point. These are papers that all participants agree represent a solid score (e.g., a 4 in Reading Comprehension/Written Expression, a 2 in Conventions, etc.). Annotate the papers to identify which qualities match the rubric. They will serve as models of each score point on the rubric.
4. Score the responses collaboratively.
 - a. Individually score the responses using the rubric and anchor set. (See anchor sets of [sample student responses](#))
 - b. Then come together as a group. Read each response aloud and, as a group, discuss the individual scores using the rubric and the anchor papers.
 - c. Try to reach consensus on the scores for each response. Discuss any scores that are not consistent.
5. After the responses are scored, discuss the responses in general — strengths, weaknesses, different approaches to the task, etc. Determine any patterns that exist in the responses as a whole (e.g., difficulty with a particular construct, such as relevance of the evidence or the organization of ideas). Individual teachers should also consider their own students' responses to determine any patterns.
6. Finally, discuss the instructional implications: “How will we address the general weaknesses? How will I address my own students' weaknesses, etc.?” Develop a plan.

Resources

Assessment Guidance Library

- [Assessment Development Educator Review Committees](#): describes the item development process and the associated committees, including information on applying for participation
- [LEAP ELA Assessment Guides](#): provides information about the test design for grades 3 through 8, English I, and English II

Practice Test Library

- [LEAP ELA Practice Test Answer Keys](#): includes answer keys, scoring rubrics, alignment information, and links to student samples
- [Practice Test Quick Start Guide](#): provides information regarding the administration and scoring of the online practice tests

Assessment Library

- [LEAP Accessibility and Accommodations Manual](#): provides information about accessibility features and accommodations
- [LEAP Technology-Enhanced Item Types](#): provides a summary of technology-enhanced items students may encounter in the computer-based tests

DRC INSIGHT Portal (eDIRECT)

- includes access to tutorials, manuals, and user guides

INSIGHT™

- Online Tools Training: helps students become familiar with the online testing platform, available [here](#) using the Chrome browser
- LEAP ELA Practice Tests: provides teachers access to accommodated print versions of the practice tests

K-12 ELA Resources Library

- [Louisiana Student Standards in ELA](#): offers comprehensive information about interpreting and implementing the standards
- [K-12 ELA Planning Resources](#): guides for planning and implementing quality ELA instruction, which include a variety of instructional strategies
- [ELA Guidebooks](#): a whole-class curriculum made by teachers for teachers and focused on real learning grounded in a collection of texts
- ELA Guidebooks [3-5](#), [6-8](#), and [9-12](#) Curriculum Guides: includes writing and reading guides, assessment approach, and instructional approaches
- [Instructional Materials Review Rubrics](#): provides links to rubrics used to evaluate K-12 instructional, assessment, and intervention materials
- [English Learner Library](#): contains a collection of resources for supporting ELs

Contact Us

- [AskLDOE](#): electronic ticket system
- assessment@la.gov for assessment questions
- elaguidebooks@la.gov for curriculum and instruction questions

Newsroom: Offers archive copies of newsletters including the LDOE Weekly School System Newsletter and the Teacher Leader Newsletter