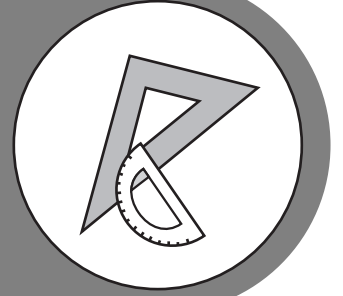


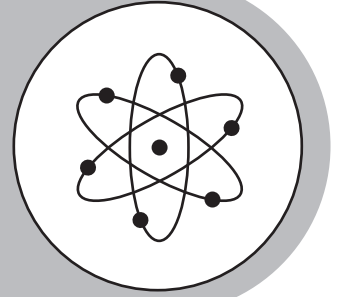
**NINTH GRADE LITERATURE
& COMPOSITION**



Study



Guide



Georgia End-Of-Course Tests

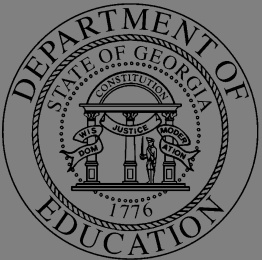


TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
HOW TO USE THE STUDY GUIDE	2
OVERVIEW OF THE EOCT	4
PREPARING FOR THE EOCT	5
Study Skills.....	5
Time Management	6
Organization.....	6
Active Participation	7
Test-taking Strategies	7
Suggested Strategies to Prepare for the EOCT.....	8
Suggested Strategies the Day before the EOCT	9
Suggested Strategies the Morning of the EOCT.....	9
Top 10 Suggested Strategies during the EOCT	10
TEST CONTENT	11
A Note on Reading Passages	12
Studying the Content Domains	13
Content Domain I: Reading and Literature	14
Content Domain II: Reading Across the Curriculum/Listening, Speaking, and Viewing.....	43
Content Domain III: Writing	56
Content Domain IV: Conventions	74
APPENDIX A: EOCT Sample Overall Study Plan Sheet	80
APPENDIX B: Blank Overall Study Plan Sheet	81
APPENDIX C: EOCT Sample Daily Study Plan Sheet	82
APPENDIX D: Blank Daily Study Plan Sheet	83

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INTRODUCTION

This study guide is designed to help students prepare to take the Georgia End-of-Course Test (EOCT) for *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition*. This study guide provides information about the EOCT, tips on how to prepare for it, and some suggested strategies students can use to perform their best.

What is the EOCT? The EOCT program was created to improve student achievement through effective instruction and assessment of the standards in the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) specific to the eight EOCT core high school courses. The EOCT program also helps to ensure that all Georgia students have access to a rigorous curriculum that meets high performance standards. The purpose of the EOCT is to provide diagnostic data that can be used to enhance the effectiveness of schools' instructional programs.

The Georgia End-of-Course Testing program is a result of the A+ Educational Reform Act of 2000, O.C.G.A. §20-2-281. This act requires that the Georgia Department of Education create end-of-course assessments for students in grades 9 through 12 for the following core high school subjects:

Mathematics

- Mathematics I: Algebra/Geometry/Statistics
- Mathematics II: Geometry/Algebra II/Statistics

Social Studies

- United States History
- Economics/Business/Free Enterprise

Science

- Biology
- Physical Science

English Language Arts

- Ninth Grade Literature and Composition
- American Literature and Composition

Getting started: The HOW TO USE THE STUDY GUIDE section on page 2 outlines the contents in each section, lists the materials you should have available as you study for the EOCT, and suggests some steps for preparing for the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*.

HOW TO USE THE STUDY GUIDE

This study guide is designed to help you prepare to take the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*. It will give you valuable information about the EOCT, explain how to prepare to take the EOCT, and provide some opportunities to practice for the EOCT. The study guide is organized into three sections. Each section focuses on a different aspect of the EOCT.

The **OVERVIEW OF THE EOCT** section on page 4 gives information about the test, such as dates, time, question format, number of questions, and types of reading passages that will be on the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*. This information can help you better understand the testing situation and what you will be asked to do.

The **PREPARING FOR THE EOCT** section that begins on page 5 provides helpful information on study skills and general test-taking skills and strategies. It explains what you should do before the test to ensure that you are prepared and what you should do during the test to ensure the best test-taking situation possible.

The **TEST CONTENT** section that begins on page 11 explains what the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT* specifically measures. When you know the test content and how you will be asked to demonstrate your knowledge, it will help you be better prepared for the EOCT. This section also contains specific test-taking strategies for successfully answering questions on the EOCT.

With some time, determination, and guided preparation, you will be better prepared to take the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*.



GET IT TOGETHER

In order to make the most of this study guide, you should have the following:

Materials

- * This study guide
- * Pen or pencil
- * Paper
- * Highlighter

Resources:

- * Dictionary
- * English textbook
- * A teacher or other adult

Study Space:

- * Comfortable (but not too comfortable)
- * Good lighting
- * Minimal distractions
- * Enough work space

Time Commitment:

- * When are you going to study?
- * How long are you going to study?

Determination:

- * Willingness to improve
- * Plan for meeting goals



SUGGESTED STEPS FOR USING THIS STUDY GUIDE

- 1** Familiarize yourself with the structure and purpose of this study guide. (You should have already read the INTRODUCTION and HOW TO USE THE STUDY GUIDE section. Take a few minutes to look through the rest of the study guide to become familiar with how it is arranged.)
- 2** Learn about the test and expectations of performance. (Read OVERVIEW OF THE EOCT.)
- 3** Improve your study skills and test-taking strategies. (Read PREPARING FOR THE EOCT.)
- 4** Learn what the test will assess by studying each domain and the strategies for answering questions that assess the standards in the domain. (Read TEST CONTENT.)
- 5** Answer the sample questions at the end of each domain section. Check your answers against the annotated answers to see how well you did. (See TEST CONTENT.)

OVERVIEW OF THE EOCT

Good test takers understand the importance of knowing as much about a test as possible. This information can help you determine how to study and prepare for the EOCT and how to pace yourself during the test. The box below gives you a “snapshot” of the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT* and other important information.



THE EOCT AT A GLANCE

Administration Dates:

The EOCT has three primary annual testing dates: once in the spring, once in the summer, and once in the winter. There are also mid-month online test dates given in August, September, October, November, February, and March.

Administration Time:

Each EOCT is composed of two sections, and students are given 60 minutes to complete each section. There is also a short stretch break between the two sections of the test.

Question Format:

All the questions on the EOCT are multiple choice.

Number of Questions:

Each section of the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT* contains 40 questions; there are a total of 80 questions on the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*.

Impact on Course Grade:

A student's EOCT score is averaged in as 15% of his/her final course grade.

Reading Passages:

There will be informational and literary passages on the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*. Please see page 12 for more information on reading passages.

If you have additional questions regarding the EOCT administrations, please visit the Georgia Department of Education Web site at www.doe.k12.ga.us, see your teacher, or see your school test coordinator.

PREPARING FOR THE EOCT



WARNING!

You cannot prepare for this kind of test in one night. Questions will ask you to apply your knowledge, not list specific facts. Preparing for the EOCT will take time, effort, and practice.

In order to do your best on the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*, it is important that you take the time necessary to prepare for this test and develop those skills that will help you take the EOCT.

First, you need to make the most of your classroom experiences and test preparation time by using good **study skills**. Second, it is helpful to know general **test-taking strategies** to ensure that you will achieve your best score.

Study Skills



A LOOK AT YOUR STUDY SKILLS

Before you begin preparing for this test, you might want to consider your answers to the following questions. You may write your answers here or on a separate piece of paper.

1. How would you describe yourself as a student?
Response: _____
2. What are your study skills strengths and/or weaknesses as a student?
Response: _____
3. How do you typically prepare for an English language arts test?
Response: _____
4. Are there study methods you find particularly helpful? If so, what are they?
Response: _____
5. Describe an ideal study situation (environment).
Response: _____
6. Describe your actual study environment.
Response: _____
7. What can you change about the way you study to make your study time more productive?
Response: _____

Effective study skills for preparing for the EOCT can be divided into three categories.

- ◆ **Time Management**
- ◆ **Organization**
- ◆ **Active Participation**

Time Management



Do you have a plan for preparing for the EOCT? Often students have good intentions for studying and preparing for a test, but without a plan, many students fall short of their goals. Here are some strategies to consider when developing your study plan:

- ◆ Set realistic goals for what you want to accomplish during each study session and chart your progress.
- ◆ Study during your most productive time of the day.
- ◆ Study for reasonable amounts of time. Marathon studying is not productive.
- ◆ Take frequent breaks. Breaks can help you stay focused. Doing some quick exercises (e.g., sit-ups or jumping jacks) can help you stay alert.
- ◆ Be consistent. Establish your routine and stick to it.
- ◆ Study the most challenging test content first.
- ◆ For each study session, build in time to review what you learned in your last study session.
- ◆ Evaluate your accomplishments at the end of each study session.
- ◆ Reward yourself for a job well done.

Organization

You don't want to waste your study time. Searching for materials, trying to find a place to study, and debating what and how to study can all keep you from having a productive study session. Get organized and be prepared. Here are a few organizational strategies to consider.



- ◆ Establish a study area that has minimal distractions.
- ◆ Gather your materials in advance.
- ◆ Develop and implement your study plan (See Appendices A–D for sample study plan sheets).

Active Participation



Students who actively study will learn and retain information longer. Active studying also helps you stay more alert and be more productive while learning new information. What is active studying? It can be anything that gets you to interact with the material you are studying. Here are a few suggestions:

- ◆ Carefully read the information and then DO something with it. Mark the important material with a highlighter, circle it with a pen, write notes on it, or summarize the information in your own words.
- ◆ Ask questions. As you study, questions often come into your mind. Write them and actively seek the answers.
- ◆ Create sample test questions and answer them.
- ◆ Find a friend who is also planning to take the test and quiz each other.

Test-taking Strategies

There are many test-taking strategies that you can use before and during a test to help you have the most successful testing situation possible. Below are a few questions to help you take a look at your test-taking skills.

A LOOK AT YOUR TEST-TAKING SKILLS



As you prepare to take the EOCT, you might want to consider your answers to the following questions. You may write your answers here or on your own paper.

How would you describe your test-taking skills?

Response: _____

2. How do you feel when you are taking a test?

Response: _____

3. List the strategies that you already know and use when you are taking a test.

Response: _____


4. List test-taking behaviors you use when preparing for and taking a test that contribute to your success.

Response: _____

5. What would you like to learn about taking tests?

Response: _____

Suggested Strategies to Prepare for the EOCT

 **Learn from the past.** Think about your daily/weekly grades in your English classes (past and present) to answer the following questions.

- In which specific areas of English language arts were you or are you successful?

Response: _____


- Is there anything that has kept you from achieving higher scores?


Response: _____

- What changes should you make to achieve higher scores?

Response: _____

Before taking the EOCT, work toward removing or minimizing any obstacles that might stand in the way of performing your best. The test preparation ideas and test-taking strategies in this section are designed to help guide you to accomplish this.

 **Be prepared.** The best way to perform well on the EOCT is to be prepared. In order to do this, it is important that you know what standards/skills will be measured on the ***Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*** and then practice understanding and using those standards/skills. The TEST CONTENT section of this study guide is designed to help you understand which specific standards are on the ***Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*** and give you suggestions for how to study the standards that will be assessed. Take the time to read through this material and follow the practice suggestions. You can also ask your English teacher for any suggestions he or she might offer on preparing for the EOCT.

 **Start now.** Don't wait until the last minute to start preparing. Begin early and pace yourself. By preparing a little bit each day, you will retain the information longer and increase your confidence level. Find out when the EOCT will be administered, so you can allocate your time appropriately.

Suggested Strategies the Day before the EOCT

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	Test				

- ✓ **Review what you learned from this study guide.**
 1. Review the general test-taking strategies discussed in the TOP 10 SUGGESTED STRATEGIES DURING THE EOCT on page 10.
 2. Review the content domain-specific test-taking strategies discussed in the section TEST CONTENT beginning on page 11.
 3. Focus your attention on the domain or domains that you are most in need of improving.

- ✓ **Take care of yourself.**
 1. Try to get a good night's sleep. Most people need an average of 8 hours, but everyone's sleep needs are different.
 2. Don't drastically alter your routine. If you go to bed too early, you might lie in bed thinking about the test. You want to get enough sleep so you can do your best.

Suggested Strategies the Morning of the EOCT



Eat a good breakfast. Eat some food that has protein in it for breakfast (and for lunch if the test is given in the afternoon). Some examples of foods high in protein are peanut butter, meat, and eggs. Protein gives you long-lasting, consistent energy that will stay with you through the test to help you concentrate better. Some people believe it is wise to eat some sugar before a test, claiming it gives them an energy boost. In reality, the energy boost is very short lived, and you actually end up with less energy than before you ate the sugar. Also, don't eat too much. A heavy meal can make you feel tired. So think about what you eat before the test.



Dress appropriately. If you are too hot or too cold during the test, it can affect your performance. It is a good idea to dress in layers, so you can stay comfortable regardless of the room temperature and keep your mind on the EOCT.







Arrive for the test on time. Racing late into the testing room can cause you to start the test feeling anxious. You want to be on time and prepared.

TOP 10

Suggested Strategies during the EOCT

These general test-taking strategies can help you do your best during the EOCT.

- 1 Focus on the test.**  Try to block out whatever else is going on around you. Take your time and think about what you are asked to do. Listen carefully to all the directions.
- 2 Budget your time.**  Be sure that you allocate an appropriate amount of time to work on each question on the test.
- 3 Take a quick break if you begin to feel tired.** To do this, put your pencil down, relax in your chair, and take a few deep breaths. Then, sit up straight, pick up your pencil, and begin to concentrate on the test again. Remember that each test section is only 60 minutes.
- 4 Use positive self-talk.** If you find yourself saying negative things to yourself, such as “I can’t pass this test,” it is important to recognize that you are doing this. Stop and think positive thoughts, such as “I prepared for this test, and I am going to do my best.” Letting the negative thoughts take over can affect how you take the test and your test score.
- 5 Mark in your test booklet.**  Mark key ideas or things you want to revisit in your test booklet. Remember that only the answers marked on your answer sheet will be scored.
- 6 Read the entire question and the possible answer choices.** It is important to read the entire question so you know what it is asking. Read each possible answer choice. Do not mark the first one that “looks good.”
- 7 Use what you know.**  Draw on what you have learned in class, from this study guide, and during your study sessions to help you answer the questions.
- 8 Use content domain-specific strategies to answer the questions.** In the TEST CONTENT section, there are a number of specific strategies that you can use to help improve your test performance. Spend time learning these helpful strategies, so you can use them while taking the test.
- 9 Think logically.** If you have tried your best to answer a question but you just aren’t sure of the correct answer, use the process of elimination. Look at each possible answer choice. If it doesn’t seem like a logical response, eliminate it. Do this until you’ve narrowed down your choices. If this doesn’t work, take your best educated guess. It is better to mark something than to leave it blank.
- 10 Check your answers.** When you have finished the test, go back and check your work.

A WORD ON TEST ANXIETY

It is normal to have some stress when preparing for and taking a test. It is what helps motivate us to study and try our best. Some students, however, experience anxiety that goes beyond normal test “jitters.” If you feel you are suffering from test anxiety that is keeping you from performing at your best, please speak to your school counselor, who can direct you to resources to help you address this problem.

TEST CONTENT



Up to this point in this study guide, you have been learning various strategies on how to prepare for and take the EOCT. This section focuses on what will be tested. It also includes a section of sample questions that will let you apply what you have learned in your classes and from this study guide.

This section of the study guide will help you learn and review the various concepts that will appear in the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*. The test is designed to test four major areas of knowledge, called **content domains**. The content domains are broad categories.

Each of the content domains is broken into smaller ideas. These smaller ideas are called **standards**. Each content domain contains standards that cover different ideas related to its content domain. Each question on the EOCT measures an individual standard within a content domain.

The four content domains for the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT* are important for several reasons. Together they represent the ability to understand what you read and communicate with others. Another more immediate reason that the content domains are important has to do with test preparation. The best way to prepare for any test is to study and know the material measured on the test. Since the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT* covers the four content domains and nothing else, isn't it a good idea to learn as much about these domains as you can? The more you understand about these domains, the greater your opportunity to be successful on the EOCT is.

The chart below lists the four content domains for the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT*.

UNDERSTANDING THE STANDARDS

One way to think about **content domains** and **standards** is to think about a supermarket. Supermarkets often group similar foods in the same aisles or areas of the store. For example, the section of the store marked "Fresh Fruits" will be a section filled with apples, oranges, and bananas, to name just a few. So the part of the store called "Fresh Fruits" is like the domain name, and all the various items—apples, oranges, bananas—are the standards that fall under that domain.

CONTENT DOMAINS

- I. Reading and Literature
- II. Reading Across the Curriculum/Listening, Speaking, and Viewing
- III. Writing
- IV. Conventions

A Note on Reading Passages

The questions for Content Domains I and II will be based on informational and literary passages. Informational passages (nonfiction) typically share knowledge and/or convey messages, give instructions, or relate ideas by making connections between the familiar and unfamiliar. Informational writing is most commonly found in academic, personal, and/or job-related areas. Examples of informational writing include letters, biographical accounts, definitions, directions, abstracts, essays, reviews, and critiques. You can find informational passages in newspapers, magazines, and textbooks. Here is a short sample of what an *informational passage* might look like.

The Dime Novel

What were people reading in the latter half of the 19th century? One popular type of book was known as the dime novel. Dime novels were typically cheaply made paperback books that cost about a dime. Dime novels were popular from 1860 to around the turn of the century. These short novels were often historical action adventures or detective stories. The stories tended to be sensational and melodramatic. When Beadle and Adams published the first dime novel, it quickly became a huge success, selling over 300,000 copies in one year.

The information in the passage above is strictly factual. Literary passages, however, will tell a story or express an idea. Literary passages (fiction) often have characters and a plot structure. Examples of literary writing include short stories, novels, narratives, poetry, and drama. Here is a short sample of what a *literary passage* might look like. This excerpt is from Mark Twain's novel *Life on the Mississippi*, in which Twain explains what it was like to become a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River.

When I returned to the pilothouse St. Louis was gone and I was lost. Here was a piece of river which was all down in my book, but I could make neither head nor tail of it; you understand, it was turned around. I had seen it when coming upstream, but I had never faced about to see how it looked when it was behind me. My heart broke again, for it was plain that I had got to learn this troublesome river *both* ways.

Studying the Content Domains

You should plan to study/review the standards for ALL four content domains. To learn what the EOCT will cover, work through this TEST CONTENT section. It is organized by the following areas within each content domain:

- **A Look at the Content Domain:** an overview of what will be assessed in the content domain. (NOTE: The names of the content domains may not be the exact names used by the Georgia Department of Education. Some of the names in this guide may have been modified to reflect the fact that this book is designed for students and not for professional educators.)
- **Spotlight on the Standards:** information about the specific standards that will be assessed (NOTE: The names of the standards may not be the exact names used by the Georgia Department of Education.)
- **Sample Questions:** sample questions *similar* to those that appear on the EOCT, followed by in-depth explanations of the answers.

Content Domain I: Reading and Literature

A LOOK AT CONTENT DOMAIN I



Test questions in this domain will ask you to read for general understanding and to identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structures and characteristics of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama. You will also be tested on your ability to provide evidence from the text to support your understanding. Your answers to the questions will help show how well you can perform on the following standards:

- Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of key literary characteristics in a variety of texts and provide evidence to support understanding
- Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of theme in literary works and provide evidence to support understanding
- Relate literary works to their historical setting or to their contemporary context
- Identify important ideas and locate support for those ideas within the text
- Understand and acquire new vocabulary and use it correctly



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of key literary characteristics in a variety of texts and provide evidence to support understanding ★

This standard is the most comprehensive of all the standards for the Ninth Grade EOCT. It encompasses all forms of literature. You must draw upon your knowledge of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama to answer questions in this domain. To review, you should refresh your knowledge of these different genres, of common literary terms, and of terms specific to certain types of literature.

The following types of passages may be used:

- Literary essay
- Functional (workplace documents such as job applications; consumer documents such as advertisements and Web pages)
- Biography
- Autobiography (including memoir and personal narrative)
- Expository (informational)
- Narrative (fiction and nonfiction)
- Speech
- Poem
- Essay (persuasive and informational/expository)
- Myth
- Drama

To make your review easier, this standard is divided into four sections: fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama. **Fiction** is a literary genre based on imagination and not necessarily on fact. Short stories and novels are examples. **Nonfiction**, on the other hand, is a literary genre based on fact. Essays, editorials, and biographies are works of nonfiction. **Poetry** is a literary genre that may encompass a variety of metered or rhythmically measured lines and is intended to evoke an emotional experience in the reader. **Drama** is a literary genre intended to be performed by actors on a stage.

FICTION

To discuss literature effectively, you need to use and understand common literary terms. Compare the following two sentences, and then decide which sentence is likely to please your English teacher more.

Sentence #1: “I thought that story was really great.”

Sentence #2: “The story had a suspenseful plot, and the character of Isaac was very believable.”

The first sentence will leave your teacher wondering why you thought it was great, while the second sentence will get you started toward a good literary review.

Questions for this standard will measure your knowledge of some common literary elements and your ability to use them to interpret what you read. Many literary elements apply to fiction as well as nonfiction. Here, we’ll discuss the most common literary elements. Later in the guide for this domain, we’ll focus on elements more specific to nonfiction, poetry, and drama.

The Importance of Time

Sometimes authors use foreshadowing and flashback to help tell a story. These techniques involve altering the timeframe from which a story is related. With **foreshadowing**, the author gives hints of what is to come in the future. With **flashback**, the storyline shifts to the past to give readers important information to help them understand the story better.

The best way to prepare for these questions is to study literary elements and terms and be sure you have an understanding of what each means. In addition, you should be able to identify literary elements and analyze their impact on a piece of literature. Below are explanations of some literary terms. Remember, you can also look these words and others up in the dictionary or in your English textbook.

Common Literary Terms

1. **Language.** Language makes literature. The words and phrases an author uses create literary works. Language and word choices vary with different literary genres. For example, the way you express your thoughts in a poem is very different than the way you express your thoughts in an essay.

One of the many choices a writer makes about language is which word to use in a given situation. **Diction** refers to the word choices a writer makes. Read the following sentences and reflect on how the word choice can impact the meaning.

Sentence 1: “Hey, y’all, let’s go to the store.”

Sentence 2: “Hey, you guys, let’s go to the store.”

Y’all in the first sentence and *you guys* in the second give information about the story’s setting. The diction might also influence your opinion of the speaker.

In addition to the use of diction, authors employ a variety of techniques to express meaning and to engage the reader. Some may use **figurative language**, or figures of speech, to convey meaning that goes beyond the literal meaning of the words. Metaphors and similes are examples of figures of speech. (Please see page 21 for more information on figurative language.)

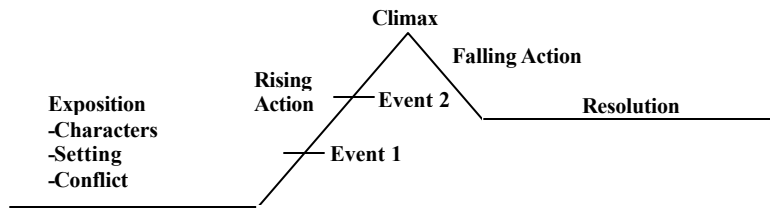
Imagery, or language that appeals to the senses, allows the reader to experience what the author is describing. You’ve heard the saying “a picture is worth a thousand words.” Well, writers use imagery to convey a mental picture for the reader—more than they could accomplish with literal words.

Symbolism is another way in which writers use language to express something more than the literal meaning of the words. A symbol is something that stands for something else. For example, an eagle may symbolize freedom.

2. **Plot.** Literature commonly follows a specific pattern or plot structure. It often begins with **exposition** that may introduce the characters, establish the setting, and reveal the problem or conflict. The tension may build through a series of **complications** (incidents that either help or hinder the protagonist in finding a solution). This is the **rising action**. The **climax** is the peak or turning point of the action. The problem is resolved. At this point the reader usually knows the outcome. The **denouement** or **falling action** is the part after the climax. It gives any necessary explanation and ends with **resolution**, the sense that the story is complete.

STRATEGY BOX—Map It Out

Using a plot map can help you better understand a story's development.



3. **Conflict.** Every plot has a conflict. The conflict is what triggers the action in the story. Here are some common conflicts in literature:
- person vs. person
 - person vs. nature
 - person vs. self
 - person vs. society
 - person vs. machine
4. **Character development.** The plot of a story focuses on the lives of one or more characters. An author may reveal a character through the character's thoughts, words, appearance, and actions, or through what other characters say or think. An author may also tell us directly what the character is like. Understanding the characters is a key element to understanding the piece of literature.

Here are some common questions about characterization:

- Who is the main character? Give five traits of this character.
 - Who are the minor characters? What roles do they play?
 - How is one character similar to or different from another?
 - How is the main character involved in the conflict?
5. **Setting.** The setting is when and where a story takes place. You may be asked to determine why the setting is important or how the setting affects the interpretation. The setting can clarify conflict, illuminate character, affect the mood (see #6 that follows), and act as a symbol.
6. **Mood.** The mood in a piece of literature is a feeling or emotion created by the words and setting. Some authors create the mood by using imagery along with the setting. The example below shows how the mood of a story can change by making a few alterations:

Imagine a group of people in an old, three-story house. The people are whispering and walking very slowly through the house. They are easily startled. Some are visibly shaking.

The mood created here is one of scary suspense. A reader will wonder what has scared the people and may feel some suspense about the events to come.

Now, change the mood by imagining the people talking loudly. They are gesturing at various rooms in the house and whistling appreciatively. They seem excited about the old, colored-glass windows. A reader could assume that these people are about to move into the old house.

The mood is no longer scary and suspenseful. It is now light and optimistic.

7. **Irony.** Irony is a form of speech intended to convey the opposite of the actual meaning of the words. There are several different types of irony: dramatic, situational, and verbal, to name a few. You are probably most familiar with **verbal irony**, or sarcasm. The speaker’s intended message is far different than the usual meaning of the words. For example, a teenager might tell his mother, “I just *love* cleaning up my room,” when, in fact, the teenager means that he hates to clean his room. Another example of irony that may not be as familiar is **irony of fate**, also called **situational irony**. Irony of fate refers to developments that are far from what is expected or believed to be deserved. One example of irony of fate would be famed composer Ludwig von Beethoven’s loss of hearing.
8. **Point of View.** The point of view is the perspective from which a story is told. The point of view depends upon who the narrator is and how much he or she knows.

<i>First Person</i>	The events are told by a character in the story using his or her own words. First-person stories have narrators who use <i>I</i> , <i>me</i> , and <i>my</i> throughout the story. This sentence is an example of first-person point of view: “I knew it was risky, but I was willing to take that chance.”
<i>Second Person</i>	The narrator addresses the reader directly using the word <i>you</i> . This perspective is not as common as either the first- or third-person points of view. This sentence is an example of second-person point of view: “You knew it was risky, but you were willing to take that chance.”
<i>Third Person</i>	A speaker outside the action narrates the events using <i>he</i> , <i>she</i> , and <i>they</i> . In third-person omniscient , the narrator may see and know everything, even the thoughts of all the characters. In third-person limited , the narrator tells the events from the perspective of one character, focusing on this character’s thoughts and feelings. This sentence is an example of third-person point of view: “Carol knew it was risky, but she was willing to take the chance.”

9. **Theme.** The theme is the central idea of a text. It refers to a universal statement about life and/or society that can be discerned from the reading of a text. The theme of a

work is not the same as its main idea, which focuses strictly on the content. The theme of a literary work is often the meaning you take away from it.

Most of these literary terms are used when discussing works of fiction. However, some of these terms can be used when talking about nonfiction articles and other pieces of writing. For example, think about your history textbook. Is the mood of the textbook humorous or educational? What is the point of view of the textbook?

Questions related to fictional texts may look like these:

Which sentence from the passage is an example of foreshadowing?

Which of the following is an example of symbolism?

How does the setting affect the theme of the passage?

STRATEGY BOX—Know the Lingo

Some of the questions on the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT* will test your knowledge of common basic literary terms. If you understand what these terms mean, you will be able to better answer these questions. Study the terms until you are comfortable with them. Learning these literary terms will help you on more than just the EOCT. If you think about them whenever you read, you will begin to understand the many facets of literature.

NONFICTION

The questions for this standard may be based on any type of nonfictional material. To begin, you need to know the difference between biographies, autobiographies, and memoirs. A **biography** is a written record of a person's life. It usually covers the subject from birth until death, or until the present if the subject is still alive. An **autobiography** is a record of a person's life written by the person whose life is being described. A **memoir** is a certain type of autobiography. It generally discusses a certain period, theme, or time in the author's life. Memoirs do not usually cover the entire life of a person from birth to the present. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, which focuses on the author's early life in the rural South, is an example of a memoir.

Questions related to nonfictional texts may look like these:

Where would this passage most likely be found?

What is the author's purpose in writing this passage?

Because nonfiction writers use some of the same literary devices, such as diction, imagery, and symbolism, that fiction writers employ, you may also see questions like these:

Why did the author most likely include the quotation in this passage?

**What effect does the descriptive language of this passage provide?
Why does the author most likely use the first-person point of view?**

STRATEGY BOX—Take Notes While You Read

Whenever you read an informational passage on the EOCT, stop after each paragraph and ask yourself, “What is the main idea of this paragraph?” After each paragraph, take a moment to jot some notes that summarize what that paragraph was about. Sample notes about an essay titled “Why Homework Is a Good Idea” might look something like this:

- First Paragraph: *importance of education*
- Second Paragraph: *advantages of giving homework*
- Third Paragraph: *how busy students feel they don’t have time for homework*
- Fourth Paragraph: *ways students who have very little time can still get their homework done*
- Fifth Paragraph: *how homework is an important part of education*

Don’t spend too much time trying to come up with the perfect summary of each paragraph. Just use about three to ten words to quickly summarize what each paragraph covers.

POETRY

For the poetry part of this standard, you need to identify and respond to the subject matter, language, and sound devices in a variety of poems. While some of these devices may appear in other fiction and nonfiction, they help to make poetry a distinctive genre.

To answer questions in this standard, you need to identify the topic of the poem—what it’s about—and its theme—what statement it makes about life or society. Then you’ll need to identify how the poet creates the topic and the theme.

As you read a poem, you may “hear” the writing in your mind. Sound devices make poetry sound better in your mind. These sound devices include the following:

1. Alliteration. Alliteration is the repetition of one initial sound in more than one word. Usually, the repeated sound is of a consonant. “Wild and woolly” and “hale and hearty” are examples.

sizzle
zoom
ding

buzz
crack
bang

Onomatopoeia is a sound device where a word imitates the sounds associated with it.

2. Rhyme scheme. The rhyme scheme is the pattern of rhymes in a poem. Each new rhyme in a stanza is represented by a different letter of the alphabet. For example, in a four-line poem in which every other line rhymes, the rhyme scheme is abab. In a six-line poem with every two lines rhyming, the rhyme scheme is aabbcc.

Be sure to study ALL the sound device terms you have learned in your English class.

Questions for this domain will also test your ability to identify types of figurative language that are often found in poetry. These figures of speech can be used in texts of all genres.

3. Figurative Language

Term	Definition	Example
Personification	A figure of speech giving human characteristics to an animal, thing, idea, or other inanimate object	The box of chocolates called to me from the kitchen.
Metaphor	An implied comparison between two unrelated things	My summer was becoming a box of chocolates melting in the sun.
Simile	A direct comparison between two unlike things, often connected by <i>like</i> , <i>as</i> , or <i>than</i>	Life is like a box of chocolates.
Hyperbole	An extravagant or excessive exaggeration	It will take me ten years to eat that huge box of chocolates.

Most questions in this category will ask you to identify one of these mechanisms in a poem. If you have memorized these terms and their definitions, you should easily be able to answer questions related to works of poetry (see next page).

Daffodils**By William Wordsworth**

I WANDER'D lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

The simile in lines 1–2 of “Daffodils” mostly describes the speaker’s

- A** dreams
- B** feelings
- C** movements
- D** thoughts

The correct answer is choice **B**. The phrase “lonely as a cloud” is a direct comparison of the speaker’s emotions to the distant, solitary cloud.

While sound devices and figures of speech are important in poetry, the structure of a poem is often its most distinctive characteristic. Poems are written in stanzas, or groups of lines. These stanzas are arranged in either fixed form or free form. **Fixed form** is what most people consider typical poetry: it’s written in traditional verse and generally rhymes. Some fixed form poems have specific requirements on length, rhyming scheme,

and number of syllables. A sonnet, for example, is a 14-line rhymed poem. **Free form**, or free verse, poetry follows no specific guidelines about rhyme, meter, or length. Free form often tries to capture the cadence of regular speech. Some stanzas may rhyme but not in a regular scheme.

Some poems are **narrative** poems. The main purpose of a narrative poem is to tell a story. **Lyric** poetry expresses a person’s thoughts or feelings. Elegies, odes, and sonnets are types of lyric poems.

For the final part of the standard related to poetry, you will need to sort and classify poems according to these forms and structures. You will have to answer questions like the example below:

Why is the poem “Daffodils” considered a lyric?

- A because it expresses the poet’s love for Greece
- B because it tells the story of the poet’s trip to Greece
- C because of its consistent abab rhyme scheme
- D because it is meant to be sung

Choice **B** describes a narrative poem. Choice **C** describes the rhyme scheme, which identifies the poem as fixed verse but not necessarily a lyric. Choice **D** confuses the meaning of *lyric* with the meaning of *lyrics*. Choice **A** is the correct answer because it is related to the expression of feelings.

DRAMA

The last part of this standard focuses on drama, or dramatic literature. You will need to identify and analyze types of dramatic literature. The two most common types are tragedies and comedies. A **tragedy** is a serious play that ends in disaster and sorrow. A **comedy** is a lighthearted play intended to amuse the audience. Comedies usually end happily.

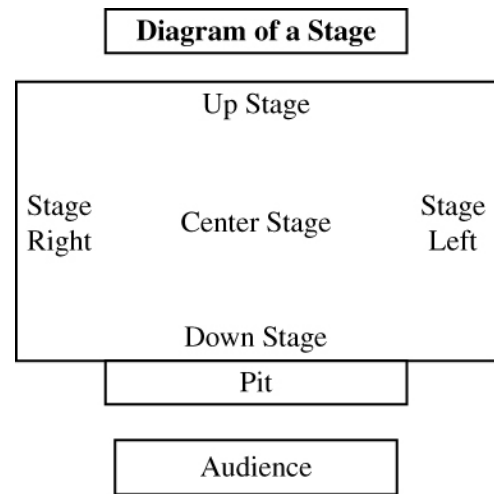
To be a Shakespearean tragedy, or not to be

English dramatist William Shakespeare (1564-1616) wrote both tragedies and comedies. His plays are readily identified because he wrote them in iambic pentameter, a pattern of five iambic feet per line. An iambic foot is one unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. You can also identify his plays by their form or plot. A Shakespearean tragedy is a five-act play in which the hero or protagonist is brought to ruin or even dies at the end. The hero is usually undone by something he does or a trait he possesses. Outside forces can contribute to his demise, but ultimate responsibility lies with the protagonist. A Shakespearean comedy is a much lighter form of entertainment. His comedies combine tales of high and low society linked by multiple plot lines with similar stories. His comedies combine music and dance.

As with other literary genres in this standard, you will be asked to analyze the characters, structures, and themes of dramatic literature. In order to answer these questions, you should use what you know about these elements in other genres.

In addition, you need to review terms that are more specific to drama. **Dramatic conventions** that you should be familiar with include exposition, rising action, climax, and denouement.

Dialogue, the lines spoken by characters, is also an important convention. A **monologue** is a long, uninterrupted speech by one character spoken in front of and heard by the other characters. A **soliloquy** is a dramatic monologue where a character reveals his or her inner feelings. It is a way for the audience to overhear the character's thoughts. Hamlet's "To be or not to be" soliloquy is one of the most famous of all soliloquies. An **aside** is a comment a character makes to the audience, which is not intended for the other characters to hear. **Dramatic irony** is a situation in which the audience knows more than the character onstage. A character does or says something of greater importance than he or she knows. The audience, however, is aware of the meaning and importance of the act or speech.



Unlike other literary genres, dramatic literature requires that some direction be given to the characters (actors). These **stage directions** might include how and where to move onstage. Playwrights give directions in relation to the actors and the physical stage. For example, stage left is the actor's left as he or she faces the audience. Playwrights also offer stage directions on how a character should act or how a set should appear. These directions are written in italics and included in brackets in the text of the play. Stage directions might be as detailed as this example :

[Unbuttoning his overcoat and stepping away from the stove, he turns to face his son.]

Or the stage directions might be as simple as the following:

[Father enters stage left.]

The final part of the standard related to dramatic literature asks you to identify and analyze how dramatic conventions support and enhance interpretation of dramatic literature. To answer questions in this section, you will need to apply what you have learned about dramatic conventions. Questions for this standard might look like this:

**What effect does the dialogue between the main characters have on the drama?
How do the stage directions contribute to the mood of the drama?**



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of theme in literary works and provide evidence to support understanding ★

The questions for this standard focus on themes. You will be asked to identify and analyze themes within a text and to evaluate how an author's style or word choice conveys a theme. You might be asked to identify multiple themes in one passage. You might also be asked to compare and contrast the presentation of a single theme across different genres. In order to answer these questions, you should review what you know about themes.

Reading a good work of fiction can provide you with more than just entertainment. It can give you insight into universal views on life and society. Most literary works have one or more themes that are expressed through the plot. To help you identify a work's theme or themes, you might ask yourself the following questions: Why did the author have this happen? What point do you think the author was trying to make? What greater significance might this event have?

Remember that a theme is not the same as the main idea or the plot. The following examples may help you to understand the differences.

Main Idea: In this novel, the protagonist, Joan, learns that her best friend, Kathy, spreads lies about Joan's mother's mental condition. Joan ends the friendship.

Theme: Friendships are often more complicated and competitive than they first seem.

The main idea in this example tells you what happens in a particular novel. It's a brief summary of the plot that offers some specific detail. The theme, on the other hand, is a more general explanation of what the plot reveals about life.

Because themes offer universal truths about life, you may more easily notice themes that are closely related to events in your life. In the example above, you might relate Joan's situation to a difficult relationship of your own. You don't have to have a personal connection to themes in a work, but if you are having trouble identifying a theme, pay attention to the parts of the story that affect you. The theme could be implicit instead of explicit.

Still Confused About Themes?

Here are some more points to consider:

- ◆ Does the title suggest the theme?
- ◆ Does the main character change in a significant way?
- ◆ Are there any symbols in the work? (Symbols are often clues to the theme.)

Questions in this standard may ask you how an author’s choice of words advances the theme or purpose of a work. These questions might look like this:

What does the author most likely mean by this excerpt from the passage?

Other questions might focus on the fact that there may be more than one theme in a passage. For example, a question might ask:

Which of the following statements does NOT reflect a theme of the passage?

You may also be asked to compare and contrast the presentation of a theme or topic across genres and to explain how the author’s choice of literary form affects the delivery of the universal ideas about life and society. Paired passages may be used. Questions for this part of the standard might look like this:

Which statement provides the BEST support for the theme of the passage?

Which universal theme is MOST apparent in both passages?

How does the idea of fate differ in the two passages?

**Spotlight on the Standards**

★ *Relate literary works to their historical setting or to their contemporary context* ★

The passages tested on this standard will be a combination of literary and non-literary texts from the same historical period and setting. Questions for this standard will ask you to relate a literary work to other literary or non-literary documents from its literary period or from its historical setting or environment. You may also be asked to relate a literary text (either historical or not) to a modern context or to modern literary texts.

A **literary period**, or **movement**, is an artistic attitude of shared characteristics. These characteristics may include the style of writing, the genre, or the subject matter. The work of a certain literary period may be a response to historical events, but it is not the same as the historical period.

Perhaps the best way to understand a literary period is to examine one. In American literature, for example, Romanticism was a literary period in the early to mid-1800s. A reaction against Neoclassicism and Rationalism, it emphasized imagination, emotion, and the individual. Romantics believed that the natural world was a source of goodness and that societies were potential sources of corruption. Romantic authors often wrote about nature using sentimental and personal language.

Some American masterpieces created during this time include James Fenimore Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans*, Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, and Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*.

Some of the questions for this standard will ask you to relate literary works to their historical backgrounds. Let's again look at Romanticism. In the United States, Romanticism flourished during a time of rapid growth and surging nationalism. The nation's population doubled between 1810 and the start of the Civil War in 1861. The literacy rates increased, and more Americans began to read newspapers, books, and magazines. The nation was no longer struggling to exist. People's attention could turn to other matters, such as literature. The focus on the individual during this time reflected American values of self-reliance.

Questions for this standard may include paired passages. One passage will be a literary work of a certain period. Another passage will be a non-literary document or other texts relevant to its historical setting. A question pairing a Romantic work with a political document from the 1830s might ask (see next page):

During which historical period do both passages take place?

- A Antebellum America
- B Civil War
- C Colonial America
- D World War II

For this question it will be helpful to note the dates of the periods listed. In choice **A**, *Antebellum* means *before* the Civil War. Choice **B**, the Civil War, occurred from 1861 to 1865. Choice **C**, Colonial America, was from settlement in the early 17th century through Independence in 1776 and choice **D**, World War II, occurred in the early 1940s. Since both passages belong between the early and mid-1800s, the years just before the Civil War, choice **A** is correct.

Historical Setting v. Historical Period

Not all literary works are set in the same period in which they are written. However, a work belongs to the literary period during which it was written. The style of writing, the choice of subject matter, and the language used will reflect the literary period. As previously discussed, historical events can influence the literary period, but they are not always the same historical events discussed in the work. To relate a work to its literary period, you need to determine when it was written.

For example, Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*, published in 1850, was part of the literary tradition of Romanticism. Yet Hawthorne set the novel in a 17th-century Puritan settlement in Massachusetts. In another example, Arthur Miller wrote the play *The Crucible* in 1953. It was set in 1692 during the witchcraft trials in Salem, Massachusetts. Miller believed the witchcraft trials had parallels to the 1950s and the work of the House Un-American Activities Commission. A question asking you to relate a literary and non-literary work relevant to its setting might look like this:

How is the excerpt from *The Crucible* reflective of the historical period described in Joseph McCarthy’s speech on communists in the State Department?

- A Both discuss secret meetings.
- B Both focus on the misdeeds of young women.
- C Both discuss attempts to label people as subversives.
- D Both are set in the same period.

The correct answer is choice C. Both works emphasize how authority figures during the two different time periods reacted with similar hysteria and paranoia to people they feared and mistrusted. In choice A, although secret meetings may have occurred, this is not the main way *The Crucible* reflects McCarthyism. Choice B is incorrect because McCarthy sought to label men as well as women. Choice D cannot be correct because the two works are set in different periods.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Identify important ideas and locate support for those ideas within the text ★

Questions in this standard ask you to identify important ideas and to locate support for these concepts within the text. Please review pages 25 and 26 on themes to help you answer questions on themes in specific literary works.

In order to demonstrate your understanding of these ideas and viewpoints, you will need to support them with accurate and detailed references or allusions to the text. Questions for this standard will ask you to identify sentences that support or explain an idea. Taking notes while you read will help you prepare for these questions.

Strategy Tip—Answer the Question First

As you are answering questions on the EOCT, you should always try to answer the question **BEFORE** you read the answer choices. Once you have decided what the answer is, look at the choices. Are there any choices close to the answer you came up with? That’s probably the correct answer. Looking at the answer choices first, before you have a clear idea of the correct answer, may confuse you. Some of the answer choices will be close to the correct answer, and if you are unsure of the correct answer, you may choose the close, but wrong, answer.

To see how this strategy works, read the following question:

Which description BEST explains the relationship between Chris and John?

Based on the passage, you might answer “a close and supportive father-son relationship.” Turning to the answer choices, you’ll find these:

- A Turbulent father-son relationship
- B Close friendship between peers
- C Nurturing father-son relationship
- D Supportive brothers

Because you have already answered the question “a close and supportive father-son relationship,” you can quickly identify choice **C** as the correct answer.

For this standard, you will also be asked questions related to bibliographies and citing formal works. You should know whether it is necessary to include a **bibliography** or a list of **works cited** with a piece of writing. If the ideas you are writing about or the words you are writing are not your own, you need to acknowledge where those words and ideas originated by including a bibliographic **citation**. Citations give credit to the author of the original idea and help readers find more information.

For example, you might be asked to decide if a bibliography is required:

Which student paper would most likely include a bibliography?

- A a story for a creative writing class
- B a letter to the school newspaper
- C a research paper about cloning
- D an essay about a personal experience

The correct choice is **C**. For a research paper, you will need to read from other sources and include references to those sources in your paper. Personal letters and essays do not

usually require bibliographies, and a creative story (fiction) will consist of your own words and ideas.

Although they both cite outside sources, there is a difference between a bibliography and a list of works cited. For more information about when to use each one, see the section “Documenting Your Sources” on page 67 in Content Domain III.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ *Understand and acquire new vocabulary and use it correctly* ★

Questions for this standard will ask you to understand and acquire new vocabulary words that are appropriate for ninth graders. You will be asked to use your knowledge of Greek and Latin prefixes, suffixes, and roots to help you determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. Items will also test your ability to use dictionaries, thesauruses, and encyclopedias.

To demonstrate your knowledge of vocabulary, you will need to be familiar with certain terms. **Idioms** are sayings or expressions that are peculiar to a particular language. The meaning of the idiom does not correspond to the literal meaning of the words. For example, if you “look like the cat that swallowed the canary,” have you really become a cat or swallowed a canary? Obviously not. Instead, this saying means you are satisfied with something that happened or you have experienced a great success.

Cognates are words that have the same origin or are related in some way to words in other languages. You can use your knowledge of other languages to help you understand the meanings of certain words. Examples of cognates are *night* (English), *noche* (Spanish), *notte* (Italian), and *nuit* (French). All are derived from an Indo-European language.

Like idioms, **figurative language** is understood by not simply defining the words in the phrase. You will need to distinguish between literal and figurative meanings of words and phrases. (Literal refers to the “primary meaning of a word or phrase.”) For example, if someone tells you to open the door, you can be fairly confident that you are, in fact, to open a physical doorway. If someone tells you to “open the door to your heart,” you are not expected to find a door in your chest. Instead, you are to open up your feelings and emotions.

Two other useful vocabulary terms are denotation and connotation. The dictionary definition of a word is its **denotation**. The **connotation** of a word is a meaning or idea associated with the word.

For example, both *laugh* and *giggle* have a similar denotation. These words refer to sounds you make when you find something funny. However, the word *giggle* has youthful connotations associated with it. You often think of children giggling, but rarely think of grandfathers giggling. The word *laugh* has no such connotations associated with it. Therefore, while the denotation of both words is the same, the connotations are different. If a writer decides to describe a grandfather giggling, she probably means to hint that he has a youthful spirit or is feeling particularly young at heart.

Another consideration when trying to identify word meanings is the pattern of word changes that indicate different meanings or functions. For example, adding an *-er* to many verbs makes them nouns. *Dance* becomes *dancer*; *listen* becomes *listener*. Adding *-ly* to some adjectives can make them adverbs. For example, the adjective *quick* becomes the adverb *quickly*. Some adjectives become nouns when *-ness* is added to the end. *Happy* becomes *happiness*, for example. Knowing words in one form will help you determine their meaning when they appear in other forms.

To answer questions for this standard, you will also have to use your knowledge of prefixes, suffixes, and word roots to understand the meaning of new words.

The English language was not created “from scratch.” It consists of borrowed words and word parts from many different languages. In particular, many words are formed from combinations of Greek or Latin prefixes, suffixes, and word roots. You can use your knowledge of these word parts to help you determine the meaning of a word. Some of these word parts appear in more than one word. For instance, the word root *geo-* is Greek for “earth.” The English words *geology* (“study of the earth”) and *geometry* (“measure of land”) both contain this word root. Once you learn the meaning of *geo-*, you can take an educated guess at what a word like *geophone* means, even if you have never seen the word before.

Geophone

As its name suggests, a *geophone* is an electronic device used to listen to vibrations in the earth. Geophones can help determine whether or not an earthquake will occur in a certain area. Although the word contains the suffix *-phone*, geophones are not used to place actual phone calls.

STRATEGY BOX—Analyze the Word by Its Parts

Look for familiar prefixes, suffixes, and word roots when faced with an unknown word. Knowing the meaning of these word parts will help you determine the meaning of the unknown word.

Questions for this standard will also test your ability to use reference materials. Do you know when to use a dictionary or a thesaurus? When would you consult an encyclopedia?

As you know, a dictionary is your best source for the definition and spelling of words. You can also discover a word's origin or etymology in a **dictionary**. To get more detailed information on subject areas, you can look in an **encyclopedia**. If you need help with diction or just don't want to keep using the same word over and over, you should turn to a **thesaurus** to find synonyms and related words.

To apply your information on using reference sources, you may be asked questions such as the following:

Read the dictionary entry below.

drive (n) 1. a trip or journey in a vehicle
2. focused energy and motivation 3. the means by which power is transferred in an engine 4. a strong, organized group effort

Which definition gives the correct meaning for the word *drive* as it is used in the sentence from the passage?

Keesha wanted Tara on her team, but she wasn't sure her friend had the drive necessary to stick with such a challenging project.

- A definition 1
- B definition 2
- C definition 3
- D definition 4

In the context of this sentence, *drive* means personal motivation and energy, so **A** is the correct choice. The other choices suggest different uses/meanings of the word.

Which resource would give the BEST information about the Underground Railroad?

- A an atlas
- B a dictionary
- C an encyclopedia
- D a thesaurus

The correct answer is choice **C**, an encyclopedia, which will give an overview of the topic. An atlas contains maps and statistics, a dictionary will simply define the term, and a thesaurus lists synonyms of words.

Study Ideas for Content Domain I

The best ways to prepare for questions assessing Content Domain I are to review the literary terms for all genres, read a variety of literary works, and identify how the authors apply many of these literary terms. As you read, ask yourself the kinds of questions described in this guide for Content Domain I and then try to answer them.

Here is a list of possible sources for appropriate reading passages:

- Anthologies of literature
- Short story collections
- Poetry collections
- Plays
- Informational articles in magazines and newspapers
- Biographies
- Autobiographies
- Books on how to do or make things

After you read the passage, ask yourself these questions:

- What is this passage about?
- What are its themes?
- In what order do things occur in the passage? What happens first?
- Does the author use imagery or symbolism?
- How does the author use language to achieve a desired effect?
- Are there any words I don't know? Can I use the words' structures to determine meaning? How does the dictionary define the words?
- (For fictional literary passages) What important events make up the plot? What is the conflict in the passage? Who are the characters? Why are they important? Where does the story take place? Is there foreshadowing?
- (For nonfiction) What is the purpose of this work? How is the passage structured? Is this passage an autobiography, a biography, or a memoir? How does the author use language to convey a message?
- (For poetry) What is this poem about? What types of sound devices does the poet use? What type of poem is it? How is the poem structured?
- (For drama) What type of dramatic literature is the passage? Who are the characters? What are the play's themes? What types of dramatic conventions does the playwright use?

Find more passages and repeat this process as many times as possible. Be sure to find both fictional and nonfiction passages as well as poetry and drama. The more you practice reading passages and asking questions and answering them, the better you will do on the EOCT.

Sample Questions for Content Domain I

This section has some sample questions for you to try. Before you answer them, take a few minutes to learn about some strategies that you can use to help you do your best on a reading test.

STRATEGIES FOR ANSWERING READING QUESTIONS

- 1. Review the test questions before reading the passage.** Reading the test questions (just the questions, not the answer choices) before reading the passage can help you focus on what you are trying to find in the passage to answer the questions. Next, read the passage. You can make notes in the test booklet as you read. When you think you have found some information that will help answer a question, make a note. Do not stop reading the passage to answer a question. After you have read the entire passage, you can go back and look at your notes and answer the questions.
- 2. Summarize the passage.** Next to each paragraph, write a brief note indicating what the paragraph is about. Use your notes like a road map to help you find the information you need to answer the questions.

Be sure to keep an eye on the time. Do not spend so much time taking notes on a passage that you don't have time to answer the questions.

- 3. Read ALL of the answer choices.** Look at each answer choice carefully. Before marking an answer, think to yourself: Is it the BEST choice? Where can I find this in the passage? What in the passage makes me think this is correct?

Do not just mark the first answer choice that looks good.

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

Why Some Flowers Bloom at Night

- 1 When the earth was very young and all plants were just beginning to find their way, all flowers bloomed whenever they pleased. There were no rules about flowers waking up with the dawn and closing tightly at sunset. Day and night, all gardens bloomed equally.
- 2 Sun and Moon were at odds often during that time. Sun didn't understand why Moon sometimes appeared during the day. Moon was unhappy because Sun ruled every day, but Moon could only appear on some nights. They tried to settle their differences themselves, but their talks always gave way to arguments.
- 3 Sun's arguments revolved around his power. "I am much bigger than you, so I am more important. My heat makes the plants grow and the people happy. You should not be wandering into the sky during my time to shine," he said.
- 4 Moon argued about fairness. "It's not right that you get so much time in the sky, and I get so little. Yes, you give heat to the world, but I supply it with coolness and fresh breezes, which give people relief from their cares. I deserve to travel the sky whenever I want to."
- 5 The quarrelsome pair decided to submit their problem to a higher authority. Because they traveled through Sky, they asked for her advice.
- 6 After listening to Sun and Moon, Sky was not certain what to do. "I think that you both make good points," she said. "But I cannot decide between you. Find another way to settle this."
- 7 So Sun and Moon asked Clouds for advice. Clouds, too, stepped away from the problem. "No, we are not meant to be your judges. If we choose for Sun, Moon will never light our path during the night, and if we favor Moon, Sun will dry us up. Please find another way to settle your problem!"
- 8 Sun and Moon were barely speaking to each other by now. They spent so much time fighting that they forgot their jobs, and the Earth became still and dark. The flowers could not bloom in the darkness. Finally, the plants on the Earth began to protest.
- 9 "It's too cold here," said the marigolds.
- 10 "Yes, we miss Sun," called out the roses.
- 11 The tulips and daffodils also spoke for Sun, "Sun's warmth always wakes us up from our winter sleep."
- 12 "That's true," said the four o'clocks, "but we miss the early moonlight."
- 13 "And I always wait for the evening breezes to send my sweet scent out," said the evening primrose.

- 14 One pale, nameless flower was most outspoken for Moon. “My silvery white flowers match the moon. I cannot imagine blooming if I cannot see the moon.”
- 15 Sun and Moon overheard the flowers’ complaints. “Perhaps the flowers can help us settle our quarrel,” they thought, so they asked the flowers to help them.
- 16 “It is in our best interest to settle this quarrel,” said a tall golden flower with a center full of seeds. The other flowers agreed. After listening to arguments for both Sun and Moon, the flowers decided they should vote on whether Sun or Moon should dominate the sky.
- 17 The tall golden flower ran to the front of the meeting. “I will be happy to count the votes. Bloom right now if you favor Sun, and please hold your bloom while I count.”
- 18 Because the flowers had not bloomed for such a long time, most of them could hardly wait to show their petals. The meeting place burst into color, and the golden flower spent most of the day counting the blossoms. By the time the votes were all counted, most of the flowers were tired and wilting on their stems.
- 19 Finally, the tall golden flower asked the flowers that favored Moon to show their blossoms. Due to the lateness of the day, only a few flowers, including the pale, nameless flower, showed their support of Moon.
- 20 The tall golden flower rushed to tell Sun about the victory. “You shall rule the sky!” the flower exclaimed.
- 21 “Because you have given me such great news, you shall be my special flower. From today on, you shall be known as Sunflower,” said Sun. As Sun spoke, the flowers that had voted for Sun nodded their heads in victory. Sun thanked them and said, “You shall bloom all day long because of your loyalty to me.”
- 22 The flowers that voted for Moon gathered about him. “We are so sorry for your loss,” the nameless white flower said.
- 23 “Don’t worry,” said Moon. “I’ll stay out of Sun’s way most of the time, but I’ll find a way to show up in the daytime sky when I think he’s not looking. And as thanks for your faithfulness, all of you flowers shall bloom at night. And you, my special friend,” he said to the silvery white flower, “you shall be called Moonflower. I will bathe you with light that will show your beautiful color at its finest.”
- 24 And that is why most flowers bloom during the day, but some flowers bloom only at night.

1 What type of figurative language does the author use to describe the Sun and the Moon?

- A metaphor
- B simile
- C personification
- D hyperbole

Answer: **C** Standard: *Identify key literary elements in a variety of texts*

The Sun and the Moon are given human characteristics. They talk, they argue. Choice **C**, personification, is the correct answer. Choices **A**, **B**, and **D** are also examples of figurative language, but they are not used here.

2 Which of the following is NOT a theme in the story?

- A** Loyalty is rewarded.
- B** Both Sun and Moon want to rule the sky.
- C** Everyone has a moment to bloom.
- D** Focusing on priorities leads to happy endings.

Answer: **B** Standard: *Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of theme in literary works and provide evidence to support understanding*

Choices **A**, **C**, and **D** are all themes found in the passage because they refer to universal statements about life. Choice **B** is the main conflict in the passage, which is not the theme, so **B** is the correct answer.

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

How Do You Build a Better Mouse?

- 1 As you read this, human factors engineers are at work trying to figure out ways to make our lives and work easier and more comfortable. Ergonomics, or human factors engineering, is the study of how humans interact with their world and their work environment. Why are some chairs more comfortable to work in? What is the best height for a keyboard to prevent neck and arm strain? What is the best height for one's countertop workspace? The study of ergonomics seeks to answer these and other questions.
- 2 The inspiration to study ergonomics began late in the 1940s. Technology was advancing in many areas: transportation, household appliances, communications, and entertainment. The first computers were in their infancy. Scientists often developed inventions and improvements, however, without taking into account the people factor: the physical interaction of the human being with the machine. As a result, the safety and effectiveness of these new technologies was limited until designers began to consider such human variables as size, range of motion, visual acuity, and age in relation to the product itself. Thus, ergonomics was born.
- 3 One of the first ergonomic inquiries was the study of a lathe in a factory. A lathe is used for cutting designs into tubular wood or metal objects like the leg of a table. Engineers studied the relative positions of the controls on the lathe. They discovered that the lathe seemed to be designed for a person 4 ½ feet tall, with an arm span of 8 feet. The lathe operator had to stop and stoop down in order to manipulate the controls. They knew that

- if they could make the lathe easier to use, operators would experience fewer injuries and would become more productive.
- 4 No matter how they redesigned the lathe, it would not be perfect for everyone, but the goal of ergonomics is to maximize the comfort and productivity for as many people as possible. *Anthropometry* is the study of the variability in size, shape and strength of people. Human factors engineers use anthropometric tables to improve the physical fit between people and the things they use, from hand tools to machinery to airplane cockpit designs.
 - 5 Sometimes ergonomics are used to improve the designs of products that we already have, and sometimes the study of ergonomics leads to the development of completely new products. One such product is the computer mouse. Doug Engelbart came up with the idea for the first mouse in the early 1960s when he was a research scientist at Stanford Research Institute in Menlo Park, California.
 - 6 Engelbart was assigned to a major project whose broadly stated purpose was to “augment human intellect.” Basically, scientists were asked to develop as many ideas as possible to enable human beings to solve complex problems more efficiently and more creatively. At the time computers were just becoming essential technological tools in government and industry. One of Engelbart’s tasks was to improve the interaction between the computer and the user so that science could take full advantage of a computer’s capabilities.
 - 7 At first, scientists tested several devices such as the light pen, joysticks, and even a knee pedal, which provided control similar to the foot pedal controlling acceleration on a car. To decide which device was superior, they designed a series of simple tasks such as moving the cursor on the screen from one object to the next. They then timed a group of volunteers to perform these tasks using a variety of input devices. The light pen took too much time because the user has to reach to pick it up each time. The mouse was clearly superior.
 - 8 The first mouse was simple, with two discs mounted perpendicularly. The user could then move it vertically or horizontally. Most of today’s mice are still mechanical but contain a round ball in the base that allow the user to move the cursor quickly in any direction. Human factors engineers have also redesigned the shape to be comfortable for the human hand. They have also added two buttons to allow for quick access to computer functions.
 - 9 The mouse is just one example of the myriad ways that ergonomics has improved our work and our lives. So the next time you pick up a phone, sit in a chair, or push a grocery cart, know that an ergonomic engineer has studied how people perform countless tasks and worked diligently to make these tasks easier and more comfortable to complete.

3 What is the author’s purpose in writing this passage?

- A to provide a brief overview of the study of ergonomics
- B to discuss the history of the computer mouse
- C to show the importance of the lathe to the development of ergonomics
- D to encourage students to sit up straight in their chairs

Answer: **A** Standard: *Identify key literary elements in a variety of texts*

Choices **B** and **C** are discussed in the article, but neither is its main focus. Choice **D** may be an unintended effect once students have read the article, but it's not the purpose. Choice **A** correctly summarizes the author's purpose in writing the article.

4 In paragraph 6, what does the word *augment* mean?

- A** condense
- B** increase
- C** energize
- D** improve

Answer: **B** Standard: *Understand and acquire new vocabulary and use it correctly*

The only option that gives the correct definition of *augment* is **B**. Choice **A** is a contrasted word. Choices **C** and **D** are close in meaning to *augment*, but neither is the best choice.

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

Excerpt from Act II, scene ii, of *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare

CAST:

ROMEO

JULIET

Set in Verona, Italy, *Romeo and Juliet* tells the story of two teenagers in love. Romeo is a member of the noble family Montague. At a party, he sees and immediately falls in love with Juliet, a member of the Capulet family, which is the enemy of the Montagues. In this scene, Romeo mistakenly ends up in the Capulet family orchard.

SCENE II. Capulet's orchard.

Enter ROMEO

ROMEO

He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

JULIET appears above at a window.

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou her maid art far more fair than she:
Be not her maid, since she is envious;
Her vestal livery is but sick and green
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.
It is my lady, O, it is my love!
O, that she knew she were!
She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?
Her eye discourses; I will answer it.
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.
See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!

JULIET
Ay me!

ROMEO
She speaks:
O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head
As is a winged messenger of heaven
Unto the white-upturned wondering eyes
Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him
When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

JULIET
O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO
[*Aside*] Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

JULIET

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
And for that name which is no part of thee
Take all myself.

ROMEO

I take thee at thy word:
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

5 What type of figurative language is used in this line?

It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

- A aside
- B simile
- C metaphor
- D denouement

Answer: **C** Standard: *Identify key literary elements in a variety of texts*

This line presents an indirect comparison between Juliet and the sun. The correct answer is choice **C**. If Shakespeare had written "Juliet is like the sun," then choice **B** would have been correct. Choices **A** and **D** are common literary terms that do not apply to this excerpt.

6 Which dramatic convention is used throughout this excerpt?

- A dramatic irony
- B exposition
- C dialogue
- D soliloquy

Answer: **D** Standard: *Identify key literary elements in a variety of texts*

In this excerpt, Romeo and Juliet are speaking to themselves about their innermost thoughts, making choice **D** the correct answer. At the end of this excerpt, there is some dialogue, but choice **C** is incorrect because it isn't the main dramatic convention used throughout the excerpt. Choices **A** and **B** are key literary terms, but they don't apply to this excerpt.

Content Domain II: Reading Across the Curriculum / Listening, Speaking, and Viewing

A LOOK AT CONTENT DOMAIN II



The test questions in this domain will measure your comprehension as you read, listen, speak, and view a variety of media. Your ability to observe and listen critically and to respond appropriately to written and oral communication in a variety of genres and media will also be tested. Your answers to the questions will help show how well you can perform on the following standards:

- Acquire new vocabulary in each content area and use it correctly
- Establish a context for information acquired by reading across subject areas
- Evaluate the messages and effects of mass media



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Acquire new vocabulary in each content area and use it correctly ★

Questions for this standard measure your ability to use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words. The tested words are ones that ninth grade students should know. Short phrases may also be tested under this standard. A question may look something like the following (see next page):

Read the following paragraph.

Everyone could tell it had once been a huge tree. The roots at its base were as large as a grown person. When the tree died, someone had used a chainsaw to cut away most of the tree. All that was left was a *truncated* stump of wood. The stump made a picnic table that could seat eight people around it comfortably.

Based on the paragraph, the word *truncated* MOST nearly means

- A modified
- B added
- C shortened
- D replaced

Truncated is a difficult word. But you can use context clues to help determine its meaning. The **context** of a word is simply the words that appear before and after the word. Understanding the words around an unknown word should help give you clues to its meaning. The words around *truncated* should give you a good idea about what it means. There was once a large tree; what happened to it? Most of it was cut down, leaving only a “truncated” stump of wood. What remained could best be described as a shortened, or truncated, piece of wood. Therefore, answer choice C is the right answer.

STRATEGY BOX—Use the Words Around It

When you are faced with an unknown word, go back to the passage. Start reading two sentences before the word appears, and continue reading for two sentences afterwards. If that doesn't give you enough clues, look elsewhere in the passage. By reading the context in which the word appears, you may be able to make an educated guess.

How a word is used in a sentence can also determine its meaning. If the context of the word changes, then the meaning of the word can also change. This change can be very basic, such as a word being used as a noun in one sentence and a verb in the next.

Set as a noun: That is a lovely *set* of dinner plates.

Set as a verb: Please *set* the books down on the table.

However, a change in meaning can be subtler. Look at the word *shrieked* in the next two sentences, and notice how the meaning of the word changes slightly.

Sentence 1: “There’s a monster in the house!” the woman *shrieked*.

Sentence 2: “I just won 65 million dollars!” the woman *shrieked*.

In the first sentence, the woman shrieks out of fear. In the second sentence, the shriek is one of extreme excitement and happiness. The context of the sentence has determined whether the *shriek* is good or bad.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ ***Establish a context for information acquired by reading across subject areas*** ★

Items written for this standard will ask you to relate common human experiences to a given text. You will also be tested on your understanding that certain words and concepts can be used in many different mediums and subject areas. In addition, questions will test the strategies you have developed to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and concepts.

For this standard, you may be asked to explore how life experiences can help you or other readers relate to the content. You might be asked questions like the following:

Which experience from the author’s life most likely influenced this passage?
What MAIN idea about society does the author suggest in this passage?
Which life experience would MOST improve a reader’s ability to identify with the main character?

STRATEGY BOX—Empathize

Good readers usually try to understand the characters better by **empathizing**, or identifying with their thoughts and feelings. Empathizing with the characters helps stories come alive and it gives readers more insight into what motivates the characters and how they influence each other.

Context, the part of a text that surrounds a particular word and determines its meaning, is also helpful in identifying the meaning of words that are being used in different subjects. For example, in science class the word *revolution* refers to a planet’s complete turn around the Sun. In social studies class, a revolution is a complete upheaval in government or society. The context of the passage will help you decide which meaning is appropriate in the passage. What other words do you know whose meaning differs significantly based on the context? Making a list will help you review for this standard.

Sometimes there are no clues in the passage to help you determine the meaning of a word so you have to make an educated guess. The strategy *Plug It In* may help you to “hear” the right answer.

STRATEGY BOX—Plug It In

To answer questions for this standard, look at the answer choices. Does one seem the most likely? Try “plugging” it in the sentence to replace the word in the question. Does the word from the answer choice make sense in the sentence? If so, it is probably the correct answer. If not, try plugging in another answer choice.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ *Evaluate the messages and effects of mass media* ★

Whether you realize it or not, you do a lot of reading every day. Much of the reading material to which you are exposed is in the form of advertisements of one kind or another. There are billboards, concert posters, political signs, and even bumper stickers. Advertising also appears during television shows and radio broadcasts, in newspapers and magazines, and on Web sites.

What Is Mass Media?

Radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and Web sites are all different channels through which Americans can receive information. Since some or all of these “media” are available to the majority of Americans every day, a large “mass” of people use them as their source for information. Taken together, all these different modes of communication—television, radio, newsprint, etc.— are often referred to as *mass media*.



Almost always, the message of all this advertising is “Buy this product!” or something very close to this idea. To get you to “buy this product,” advertising employs a wide variety of persuasive techniques. Some ads contain statements from famous or popular people claiming that Product X is the only product they would use. Other ads might try to convince you to see a certain movie simply because it is the “number one film in the country.” The idea here is that since everybody else is seeing it, it must be good.

Questions for this standard will often test your ability to read a piece of advertising or other mass media message and determine how it is trying to influence you.

Questions for this part of the standard may look like the following:

Read the following excerpt from a television advertisement.

Did you know there's a place you can go to see million-year-old popcorn, bacon, and soda straws? How about a giant version of Babe Ruth's baseball bat? Or a miniature version of the Empire State Building? It's not a museum or movie set—it's Lewis and Clark Caverns, a natural limestone cave in southwestern Montana.

How does the language used in this advertisement impact the mood conveyed?

- A** Unusual questions create curiosity.
- B** Formal sentences suggest authority.
- C** Scientific terms suggest believability.
- D** Lighthearted joking creates humor.

Reading the excerpt, readers are likely to be curious about the unexpected and unusual images, so the correct answer is choice **A**. Choices **B** and **C** are incorrect because the language is not formal and the terms are not scientific. The language is casual, but is not joking or humorous, so choice **D** is also incorrect.

Types of Arguments

No, we aren't talking about disagreements over the last cookie or the last parking space. We're talking about how ads try to persuade you to buy something. Their arguments are facts or assertions offered as proof that something is true. Here are some common types:

Argument by authority relies on statements from authority figures, experts, or professionals to convince you of something. For example, an advertisement claiming that three out of four dentists agree that this toothpaste is the best is an argument by authority.

Argument by emotion appeals to your feelings. Relief organizations often show pictures of people in very unfortunate situations to move you to donate money.

Argument by logic is an appeal to reason and evidence to convince you of something. An example might be, "People who have used our product have lost weight. You want to lose weight. If you buy this product, you will lose weight." Beware of false logic, however. Just because some people buy a product and lose weight does not mean the product was responsible. That's why diet aid ads often warn that the results of their models are not typical.

Questions for this standard will also ask you to evaluate the arguments made in the mass media. In particular, you may be asked to evaluate the evidence authors use to make their arguments.

A **conclusion** is a statement that must be true if the supporting statements are true. These supporting statements might be facts, or they might be assumptions that are believed to be true.



Build a Pyramid



Visualizing a pyramid is one way to understand the relationship between conclusions and supporting statements. The conclusion is the top block of a pyramid. It rests on all the lower blocks, which are the supporting statements. With this image, you can see how conclusions are "held up" by their supporting arguments and how supporting arguments "build up" to a conclusion.

These questions will focus on the relationship between supporting evidence and conclusions. For example, an author may argue that a bird the size of a small plane really exists in the Alaskan wilderness. You might be asked the following question:

Which statement would BEST support the author’s argument?

- A Several Alaskan companies use small planes.
- B People outdoors often imagine they see things.
- C All the animals in Alaska have been researched.
- D Nature has the ability to constantly surprise us.

Since the conclusion is given, that the bird really exists, you can ask yourself, “Which answer choice helps support this conclusion?” The answer choice that helps will be the correct answer. In this case, “Nature has the ability to constantly surprise us” helps support the claim that something never seen before—a bird the size of a small plane—actually exists. The answer is choice **D**.

STRATEGY BOX—Become a Detective

Take a close look at the passage. What kind of support does the author offer? Does the author use personal examples, descriptive details, endorsements (testimonials), statistics, relevant research, facts, opinions, or hearsay as support? The kind of support tells a lot about how strong the argument is. For example, if the author uses a personal example to make a point about how well a medical procedure works, it is not as convincing as scientific research to support the claim.

Another aspect to review for this standard is how different kinds of media cover the same event. You may be asked to compare and contrast televised news, news magazines, documentaries, and online information.

How Television and the Internet Have Changed the News

When your parents were young, they got their news from television, newspapers, and radio. To learn what had happened during the day, they had to wait for the evening news, the morning paper, or the scheduled radio broadcast. Only rarely did special bulletins interrupt regularly scheduled programming and deliver news outside of the scheduled time. Now you can get your news around the clock. Several cable television networks broadcast twenty-four hours a day. Newspapers on the Internet update their Web pages several times a day, if not an hour. You can often see events live as they are unfolding. In response to this easy and constant access to information, daily newspapers and nightly television news programs have seen a steady decline in readers and viewers. Newspapers and the TV news still report on the nuts and bolts of events, but more and more they focus on the analysis of events.

To review for this standard, select one significant national or international current event, and read or watch everything you can about it. How does the coverage of the event change from day to day? What kinds of stories will appear about it in six months? How is the coverage in a television news program different from the coverage in a magazine? Questions for this standard may ask you which source would be the best for reliable information.

Assessing Mass Media

Just as you evaluated written passages in Domain I, you are asked here to assess the effectiveness of different forms of electronic communication. But how do you evaluate them? In much the same way you evaluated literary passages. You will look for evidence that the movie, Web site, or advertisement made its point. As you watch a movie or a television program or read a Web site, ask yourself the following questions:

- √ Is the style right for the message?
- √ Am I getting all the information I need, or am I confused about the message?
- √ Is the presentation clear?

You should also pay attention to how an advertisement, film, or Web site looks. Part of its effectiveness depends on how the visual aspects appeal to you. You're told not to judge a book by its cover, but it is okay to judge a Web site by the layout of its home page. It's okay to judge an advertisement on how the background behind a new CD increases your desire to buy it.

Just as you evaluated the diction and tone of the literary passages in Domain I, you should evaluate the word choices and tone used in media presentations. Is the formal level of speech in that news broadcast appropriate? Should a more informal tone be used in taped interviews?

Because the EOCT is a written test, you will not be asked to watch or listen to media broadcasts. You will be given written passages such as advertisements, newspaper articles, and pages from Web sites. Questions for this part of the standard may look like the following:

Use this Web page to answer the questions that follow.

STAY OFF, STAY AWAY, STAY ALIVE

Train and Track Safety for Pedestrians

NEVER walk on or near railroad tracks. **TRACKS ARE FOR TRAINS.**

NEVER place your toys on the track.

NEVER throw your toys at a train.

NEVER get in or walk around a railroad car parked on the tracks. It can move suddenly without any warning.

NEVER climb on or between standing railroad cars or take a short cut by crawling under them. It can be very hard to hear a far-away engine that might move the train.

NEVER get on, walk across or fish from a railroad bridge. There are no sidewalks for you to move to if a train comes. The train does not generally blow the whistle at the bridge.

NEVER walk into a railroad tunnel. Tunnels are only wide enough for the train itself and a train can come at anytime.

NEVER stand next to a moving train. You never know what might shoot out from under the wheels of the train.

[Home Sweet Home](#)

[Schoolhouse](#)

[Camp RRC](#)

[RRC Park](#)

[Ask the Commissioners](#)

[Grownups' Resources](#)

[Spotlight on Kids](#)

[Resources](#)

[What's Cool](#)

For which audience is this Web page mostly intended?

- A children
- B parents
- C police
- D teachers

From the tone of the text and some specific clues (*toys, kids*) you can tell that this Web page is intended for choice **A**, children. The topic is intended for those who may not be aware of train safety: parents, police, and teachers are likely to already know these safety rules.

Which section of the Web page provides additional information about the topic?

- A** the subtitle
- B** the bold words
- C** the paragraphs
- D** the smaller box

The correct choice is **D**. The smaller box contains Web links (indicated by the underlined subject names) that can be clicked on to find out more about this and related topics. None of the other choices lead to additional information that is not already visible on the page.

What feature of this Web page MOST helps convey its message?

- A** the boxed outline
- B** the repeated words
- C** the capitalized title
- D** the additional links

The Web page gets its point across by repeating commands, so the correct answer is **B**. The word *stay* is repeated in the title and the word *never* is repeated in the body of the text. The other choices are features that help organize the information, but no choice is more prominent than “the repeated words.”

Study Ideas for Content Domain II

The easiest way to prepare for questions for this content domain is to read, watch television, and surf the Internet. Can you think of a better way to study for a test? This isn't just fun and games, though. Remember that you need to read, watch, and surf with a critical eye.

As you read anything—magazines, cereal boxes, greeting cards, a math textbook, or bumper stickers—make a mental note of any unfamiliar word. Can you figure out its meaning by the context? Have you encountered this word in a different context? As you watch commercials and read ads, try to determine the intended audience (e.g., children, teenagers, adults, women, men) and what approach is used (e.g., If you use this product, you will be popular; a famous athlete likes this product, so you will too.) As you watch television news or news magazines, listen to the tone and style of the presenters. Do the anchors adjust their speech to fit the topic? As you read Web sites, try to figure out their purpose. Why did the Web site author use that particular format? Paying attention as you do things that you enjoy may help you do well on the EOCT.

Sample Questions for Content Domain II

This section has some sample questions for you to try. After you have answered each question, the correct answer will be provided as well as an explanation as to why the other answer choices are incorrect.

The content below appears on a Web site about Chinese American authors. It appears under the Biography section.

Jeanne M. Lee

- 1 Jeanne M. Lee grew up enjoying the folktales of her native Vietnam. As an author and an artist, she recreates these folktales for American children today. *Ba-Nam* is a story based on her childhood experiences celebrating Thanh-Minh (tan-min) with her family. Thanh-Minh is the holiday of the dead, a sort of Vietnamese Memorial Day.
- 2 In the *Legend of the Li River: An Ancient Chinese Tale*, Lee recounts the story of how the Li River was created. A sea princess wished to give something back to the people who were building the Great Wall of China, so she created the beautiful river for them to gaze upon while they worked. Lee is known for the tranquility and the simplicity of her art and her writings. Her stories melt into her illustrations from page to page like a Chinese screen painting, creating a unique visual experience for the readers.

1 What additional information is needed to understand why the content about Lee appears on a Web site about Chinese American authors?

- A She was born to Chinese parents and later moved to the United States.
- B She moved to the United States from Vietnam and wrote about China.
- C China and Vietnam are both part of Asia.
- D Folktales are the same throughout Asia.

Answer: **A** Standard: *Formulate reasoned judgments about written and oral communication in various media genres*

Choice **A** provides the information necessary. Lee appears on a Web site of Chinese-American authors because she was born to Chinese parents and now lives in the United States. Adding this information would also clear up confusion about why she writes about China. Choice **B** explains why Lee is an American but not why she is a Chinese American. Choices **C** and **D** are incorrect because they do not clarify Lee's background.

2 Based on the context provided in paragraph 2, the reader can infer that *tranquility* means

- A state of being calm
- B use of vivid colors
- C precise technique
- D dissatisfaction

Answer: **A** Standard: *Establish a context for information acquired by reading across subject areas*

Choice **A** is correct. Sentence 5 establishes that Lee’s works are soothing. Gazing at the water is a peaceful activity. The word *simplicity* reinforces this idea. Choice **D** is the opposite of *tranquility*. Choices **B** and **C** do not fit in a context of simplicity.

3 Based on information in the passage, which experience in Jeanne M. Lee’s life most likely influences the writing of her stories?

- A moving to the United States
- B becoming an artist
- C growing up in Asia
- D celebrating holidays in the United States

Answer: **C** Standard: *Establish a context for information acquired by reading across subject areas*

Choice **C** is correct. Lee’s experiences in Asia most likely contribute to her use of Vietnamese and Chinese folktales. The settings and events of her stories involve Vietnam or China in some way. In addition, her art resembles a Chinese screen painting. Choice **B**, becoming an artist, is important to her work overall, but it may not contribute directly to her writing. Choices **A** and **D** involve living in the United States, which may be a factor in her writing. However, Lee’s experiences in Asia are likely to be more influential in her writing.

Content Domain III: Writing



A LOOK AT CONTENT DOMAIN III

Test questions in this domain will measure your ability to recognize coherent and focused writing. Your answers to the questions will help show how well you can perform on the following standards:

- Organize a writing sample
- Demonstrate knowledge of coherent and accurate informational and technical writing
- Use research and technology to support writing
- Use the writing process to develop, revise, and evaluate writing

Learning to become a good writer takes many years and lots of practice. Writing is a complex process that involves numerous different elements. Understanding these elements can help you become a better writer, and that is the purpose of Content Domain III. While this domain cannot cover every aspect of writing, it does cover many of the major elements of writing that are important for you to understand.

Since the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition* EOCT is a multiple-choice test, you will not have to do any actual writing. Instead, many of the questions in this domain will provide you with samples of writing, and your task will be to distinguish the good writing from the poor writing. Some of the questions will present a single sentence for you to evaluate, while others will present a short passage with numbered sentences. After reading the sentences or passages, you may be asked to answer questions like these:

What is the BEST way to revise sentence 2 to maintain a formal tone?

Which sentence would go BEST at the beginning of the article?

Which sentence does NOT belong in the researched essay?

When you come across these questions, remind yourself that the key to answering them is to distinguish the good writing from the poor writing. Overall, you want to make sure the writing in the passage is precise, well organized, and easy to understand.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Organize a writing sample ★

Even though this standard is one of the shortest on the EOCT, it may also be one of the most difficult for students. For this standard, you must be able to apply what you know about grammar, word usage, and style to create an organized writing sample that is appropriate for the audience, maintains a coherent focus throughout, and signals closure at the end. You will be tested on a variety of passages, such as letters, reports, essays, student journals, and newspaper articles.

Most people write because they have something to say. Journalists write newspaper articles to inform readers about a particular event. Nonfiction writers create pieces to inform readers and to stimulate their thoughts. Even a simple journal entry is written for a reason.

The primary message of a piece of writing is often called the **thesis**, or main idea. Sometimes the main idea is stated very clearly. For example, suppose you are reading an article titled “Why Getting Nine Hours of Sleep Is Good for Teens.” Most likely, the main idea of this article is that getting an ample amount of sleep each night is important for teenagers. It is the author’s job to provide sufficient information to show the reader that the idea has merit. To do this, the author will use supporting ideas and examples as evidence to support the thesis.

Understanding the main idea is crucial to understanding a passage. It would be hard to understand the article about sleep and teens without realizing that the main idea of the article is that getting at least nine hours of sleep each night is good for teens. (You may not *agree* with the main idea, but you do have to *understand* it.) You would be missing the point of the article if you did not understand the thesis correctly.

Tips for Finding the Main Idea and Subordinate Ideas

The questions for this standard will be based on informational passages. (See the short sample titled “Vegetarian Pizza—A Healthy Alternative” on page 60 or look at the passage “How Do You Build a Better Mouse?” on pages 37-38 for a longer example.)

Authors of informational or technical texts often use a traditional outline to plan their writing. They may first state the main idea they want to get across and then address all the supporting ideas, leaving the reader with an impression, a prediction, or a pondering thought about the main idea. See the example outline in the box.

From this outline, it is clear that the main idea is “writers should take advantage of the different resources available to them.” The main idea for this paper will most likely be in the thesis sentence of the introductory paragraph. Each paragraph will support the main idea by identifying a category of resources (e.g., the World Wide Web) and then giving specific information about it.

The **main** idea can often be found in one or more of these places:

- The title
- The thesis statement
- The conclusion

The **subordinate**, or supporting, ideas of a passage can often be found in one or both of these places:

- The topic sentence of each paragraph
- The body paragraphs

In a well-written passage, you should find evidence to support main and subordinate ideas. This evidence might include

- Anecdotes
- Descriptions
- Facts
- Statistics

OUTLINE

Title: Options for Research

Thesis There are many different resources you can use when researching a topic.

- I. The library has more than books
 - a. Magazines
 - b. Reference materials
 - c. AV materials
 - d. Internet access
- II. What’s on the Web
 - a. Academic sites
 - b. News sites
 - c. Company sites
 - d. Personal sites
- III. Interview the experts
 - a. Scholars in the field
 - b. Professionals

Concluding statement: When researching a topic, take advantage of the many resources available.

The Secrets of Organization

A gifted writer knows that there are many ways to organize information. Different topics require different structures. Some of the more common ways to organize a passage include

- Chronological order
- Cause and effect
- Compare and contrast
- Asking and answering questions

A writer's choice of structure depends on the point he or she wants to make. An informational report, for example, may start with "How can you conserve energy?" and then be followed by the answer in a series of well-supported paragraphs.

The questions on the EOCT that address the meaning, interpretation, or evidence in a passage may look like these:

Which would be the best topic for the essay?

Which sentence would be the BEST conclusion for the essay?

What information would be the BEST to add to the essay?

Questions for this standard will often be preceded by a short essay. You can use the same approach for these shorter essays that you would for a regular full-length reading passage. Start by looking over the essay to find the main idea. Then use this information to help you answer the questions. The questions might ask you to determine the best topic sentence (e.g. one that introduces a topic or idea) or concluding sentence (e.g. one that summarizes a topic or idea), identify a sentence that is out of sequence or one that is extraneous or unrelated to the topic, or identify the organizational structure of the passage. Try these techniques on the sample essay on the next page.

Vegetarian Pizza—A Healthy Alternative

(1) Eating healthy meals is easier than you may think! (2) There are many healthy and nutritious meals that are easy to prepare. (3) One great idea is to make a vegetarian pizza. (4) There are many ingredients that can be used to make this wonderful treat. (5) Fresh vegetables are, of course, the secret of this very special pizza, including zucchini and yellow squash, fresh sliced tomatoes, chopped garlic (if desired), or any other fresh vegetables of your choice. (6) When placed on prepared whole-wheat pizza crust spread with a vegetarian pizza sauce and sprinkled with low-fat mozzarella cheese, you have a healthy and nutritious alternative to many other pizzas that are high in calories and fat. (7) The best thing about this meal is that it is delicious! (8) Another great healthy meal is grilled chicken salad. (9) Your vegetarian pizza will also contain excellent nutritional content.

(10) Per slice, your vegetarian pizza will contain approximately 320 calories, 5 grams of saturated fat, 23 mg of cholesterol, 220 mg of sodium, 37 grams of carbohydrate, and 16 grams of protein. (11) As opposed to many other meal options, vegetarian pizza is a wise choice for anyone who is committed to good nutrition and a healthy body. (12) Why not try a vegetarian pizza today?

Which statement is the BEST thesis for this passage?

- A One healthy meal choice is a vegetarian pizza.
- B Healthy meals can be easy and delicious.
- C Whole-wheat pizza dough is a healthy alternative.
- D People should maintain a healthy diet.

For this question, your objective is to determine the main idea of the passage. Are the paragraphs mostly about various kinds of healthy foods? They are actually more specific than that, so choices **B** and **D** are too general to act as a good thesis for the passage. This leaves choices **A** and **C**. Choice **C** is certainly part of the passage, but choice **A** is more closely related to all of the content. Therefore, choice **A** is the BEST answer.

Which sentence would be the BEST topic sentence for the second paragraph?

- A sentence 1
- B sentence 4
- C sentence 6
- D sentence 9

For this question, the objective is to find the sentence in the two paragraphs that can serve as the topic sentence for the second paragraph. Paragraph 2 details the nutritional facts about vegetarian pizza and then sums up the entire passage. Since a well-developed paragraph states its purpose and groups like ideas together, moving sentence 9

to the start of the second paragraph makes the most sense. Therefore, the correct answer is choice **D**.

What information does NOT belong in the passage?

- A sentence 1
- B sentence 5
- C sentence 8
- D sentence 11

For this question, having a clear idea of the thesis will help you identify inappropriate information that is not directly related to the subject of the passage. Choices **A** and **B** give specific details related to the main idea. Choice **D** is also related to the main idea since it states a clear reason for eating a vegetarian pizza. The information in sentence 8 is not related to vegetarian pizza. Therefore, choice **C** is the correct answer.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Demonstrate knowledge of coherent and accurate informational and technical writing★

This standard builds on the previous standard. Questions for this standard will ask you to choose the best sentences to use to engage an audience, develop a controlling idea, summarize a passage, or provide detailed information in a style and tone that are appropriate for the intended audience. Some of the passages that you will be asked to read are informational passages. Examples of informational passages include reports, magazine articles, or informative essays. Other passages you will be asked to read are technical passages. Examples of technical passages include consumer and workplace documents, such as letters, warranties, memorandums, user manuals, Internet sites, and advertisements. You may also be tested on appropriate style conventions for documents such as business letters and memoranda.

Informational

To prepare for this section, you should review the information in this study guide about organizational patterns, thesis statements, and main ideas. You should also take a look ahead to the next standard, which reviews research techniques.

STRATEGY BOX—Choose the BEST Answer

As you take the EOCT, you may come across answers that seem pretty close to the one you had in mind. Caution—read all of the answer choices before you mark your final answer! You need to find the BEST answer, and it may be the last one given. All of the answer choices on the EOCT should sound somewhat reasonable (especially if you haven't read the passage carefully), but there is only ONE correct answer.

Technical

This section of the standard covers the different strategies used in technical writing. To prepare for this section, you will first want to become familiar with the different types of technical writing—such as business letters, proposals, memoranda, advertisements, warranties, and even Web pages. These different kinds of technical writing require using a variety of formats, as well as different levels of formal and informal language.

Try to imagine the intended audience for a particular piece of writing. Was it written for a particular group of people who share a common interest, or is its target audience the general public? Determining who the intended audience is can help you understand the purpose of the writing.

Understanding the audience also helps you identify language that is appropriate for the situation. For example, an advertisement that targets teens will likely use less formal language than what you would find on a professional Web site or in an owner's manual for a CD player.

Generally speaking, you should be able to distinguish between formal and informal language. Typically, formal language is more grammatically precise and contains longer sentences and more elaborate wording. In contrast, informal language is not always grammatically accurate, and it may include slang words and phrases.

The following chart compares formal and informal language.

Informal	Formal
Dude! You've got to hear this song!	The sound quality of the model TX is unsurpassed in the industry.
No way, no how, can you beat our sale prices!	The results of the survey indicate that consumer spending has dropped over the last six months.
I just heard the most awesome news about Janet.	We have just learned from our sources in the White House that a major political figure is about to resign.

STRATEGY BOX—Who Is Your Audience?

Using language that is appropriate for a given situation often involves deciding on whether formal or informal language should be used. You always need to think about the situation and audience. The goal is to match the formality of the situation and audience with the formality of the writing.

Knowing the target audience is particularly important when you are evaluating technical documents such as advertisements. The images, text, and sound that are included in an advertisement will influence how successful the ad will be. Questions on the EOCT may ask you to identify the likely purpose of pictures used in an advertisement or to identify the most appealing language for an effective ad.

Good technical writers adjust their vocabulary, style, and tone to fit their intended audiences. They also present their information in a format most readers would recognize. The page layout, font, and spacing you use can make your document easier to read. You will be tested on your ability to recognize the appropriate style for technical documents. Questions for this standard might look like this:

Use the letter below to answer the following questions.

Joseph Pena, President
WXYZ Television

Hi Joe,

1) I am very interested in a summer internship with your station. 2) My previous experience makes me an ideal candidate and will fit well with your needs. 3) I have done the lighting and worked as a stage hand for the Midland High School drama club. 4) I am eager to gain experience working with cameras.

5) Your job posting said you would notify applicants of your decision by June 1. 6) I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Chandra Byrnes

Which line is too informal for the letter?

- A Hi Joe,
- B I have done the lighting and worked as a stage hand
- C I look forward to hearing from you.
- D Sincerely,

In this example, choice **A** is too informal. A letter sent along with a job application should address the employer formally: “Dear Mr. Pena.” The other lines are all appropriate for the context of the letter.

How are sentences 3 and 4 BEST combined?

- A I am eager to gain experience working with cameras since I have done the lighting and worked as a stage hand for the Midland High School drama club.
- B I am eager to gain experience working with cameras, I have done the lighting and worked as a stage hand for the Midland High School drama club,
- C I have done the lighting and worked as a stage hand for the Midland High School drama club and I am eager to gain experience working with cameras.
- D I have done the lighting and worked as a stage hand for the Midland High School drama club, but I am eager to gain experience working with cameras.

The correct answer, choice **D**, is the smoothest combination of the two sentences. Choice **A** is incorrect because its meaning is unclear. Choice **B** is incorrect because it contains a comma splice: a comma is incorrectly used to separate two sentences. Choice **C** is incorrect because it is a run-on sentence.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ *Use research and technology to support writing* ★

Questions for this standard will test your ability to choose the best sources and methods for researching a particular topic. You will also be asked how to add quotations and documented citations into a text using appropriate conventions.

The research process refers to many different steps related to finding information. Roughly speaking, it means going to appropriate resources (e.g., the library or the World Wide Web) with a question and finding a way to answer it. Although the *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT* is an English test, the focus is not necessarily on the kind of research you would do for an English assignment. The focus is on the skills that you can use for any of your subjects. The research process can be broken into several steps, as shown below.

Some Steps in the Research Process

1. Deciding on a Topic. When determining a topic for a paper, be sure to keep the scope within a reasonable range. Many students pick topics that are far too broad to cover in the number of pages they have been assigned. For instance, they might decide to write a three-page paper on “American inventors in the Twentieth Century.” This topic is too

broad for a three-page paper (or even a three-volume series). It would be better to pick a single inventor, like George Washington Carver, for your paper. Three pages are enough for a very brief introduction to Carver’s life and major inventions. Students can also experience the opposite problem—a topic that is too narrow in scope. For example, it would probably be very difficult to write three pages about Carver’s first pet. The EOCT might ask you to select the best research topic among several choices. You would need to consider which topics are too broad or too narrow and eliminate those choices.

2. Locating Primary and Secondary Sources. Once you have decided on a topic, you need to locate reliable sources of information about your topic. There are two types of

Don’t Always Believe Everything You Read

Be careful when doing research online. We often accept the accuracy of what we read in books because we know that publishers and the editors who work for them would not stay in business long if they printed books full of factual errors. But people who “publish” material online don’t have the same pressure to be accurate. Practically anyone with a computer and an Internet account can publish material online. It is important that you consider the source of any material you find on the Internet. When you find a Web resource, try to find out which person or organization is publishing it, and then ask yourself if that person or organization is a respectable, trustworthy source for information on the topic you are researching.

sources that you should consider. **Primary sources** are records of events by people who participated in or witnessed the events. For the report on George Washington Carver, a copy of his laboratory notes would be a primary source. Personal interviews and witness accounts are also primary sources. **Secondary sources** are records of events by people who did not participate. A textbook is a secondary source, as are encyclopedias and almanacs.

The growing popularity of computers and the Internet has had a major impact on the way research is conducted. One of the most efficient ways to begin to gather information on a topic is to go to an Internet search engine and type in some key words. You can find both primary and secondary sources online. For instance, simply typing in George Washington Carver will bring you a number of links to different Web sites where you can gather information about the inventor.

Using additional key words, however, will help you refine your search. If you are interested in writing about Carver's life, entering the key words *George Washington Carver* and *biography* or *early childhood* should lead you to sites that discuss his life. However, if you are interested in one of his inventions in particular, you would be better off typing in *George Washington Carver, Cotton Hybrid*, (one of his inventions). Using these key words should give you links to sites where people discuss Carver's hybrid cotton.

Read All About It

Here is a list of some common reference materials:

- ✓ Dictionary
- ✓ Thesaurus
- ✓ Atlas
- ✓ Almanac
- ✓ Encyclopedia
- ✓ Library catalog

The Internet should not be your only research tool. A question on the EOCT may ask you to choose the best source for a given topic. These sources may include books, journals, microfiches, almanacs, documentaries, or CD-ROMs. See step 4 for more detail.

3. Paraphrasing Information. Research papers would be much easier if you were allowed to simply copy, word for word, exactly what your source material said. This is plagiarism, however, and it is illegal! Instead, you need to take the information you read and rewrite it in your own words. This process is known as paraphrasing. Questions on this aspect of the research process might ask you to select the correct way to quote material from sources.

4. Identifying and Analyzing Sources. Questions on the EOCT will ask you to identify appropriate sources for research. You will also need to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of different sources.

What Is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is taking someone else's words or ideas and presenting them as your own. You may use another person's words (either the exact wording or a paraphrase) only if you cite the source (give credit to where you found the information). If you use the exact same wording as the original, you need to put these words in quotation marks.

Reference materials refer to informative, nonfiction resources like an encyclopedia, almanac, or electronic database. For the EOCT, it will be helpful to be familiar with the purpose of these materials and how to use them. If you would like to find out more about the reference materials available in your library, ask your librarian to assist you.

In addition to being knowledgeable about reference materials, it is also helpful to know the parts of a book and what each part can tell you. This information can help you quickly locate information in the book. Familiarize yourself with each part of the book and how it could help in your research efforts. You should also familiarize yourself with the formats of and information provided in other sources. Questions for this standard might look like these:

Which would be the BEST place to research the migration patterns of Canada geese?

- A** a field guide to North American birds
- B** an atlas of the North American continent
- C** a journal article on seasonal Canada goose populations
- D** an interview with an expert on identifying Canada geese

The best source of information about migration patterns is choice **C**, the article about seasonal goose populations. Readers would expect this source to discuss where geese live in spring and fall and could therefore expect a discussion of migration. Choice **A**, a field guide, is simply a guide to bird identification. Choice **B**, an atlas, would show maps but not migration patterns. And in choice **D**, the expert on identifying geese would not likely have as much information about migration as the journal article.

5. Documenting Your Sources.

Do you know how to determine if you need to create a bibliography or a works cited list? They look similar, but a works cited list only documents the works you have specifically referenced in your paper. A bibliography contains all the works you consulted during your research. It will include all the works you cited and also any works that you did not specifically cite.

For this standard, you will need to know what information is included in a bibliographic entry and how to format that information. You might be asked a question like the following (see next page):

Read this bibliographic entry for a magazine article.

“Team Building in Youth Sports.” *Physical Education Magazine*. June 2007: 23–27.

What error does the entry contain?

- A The title is incorrectly punctuated.
- B The name of the author is not included.
- C The lines are incorrectly indented.
- D The page numbers are in the wrong place.

Bibliographic entries should begin with the last name of the author (or editor), so the correct answer is choice **B**. Choice **A** is not the correct answer because titles for magazine articles are enclosed in quotation marks, as shown. The second line is indented as it should be, so choice **C** is incorrect. Choice **D** is not the answer because the page numbers are placed correctly at the end of the entry.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Use the writing process to develop, revise, and evaluate writing ★

Effective written communication does not happen without a bit of effort. Most informational or technical pieces require hard work and revision before they can be considered excellent, or even very good. Even professional writers may struggle with their words. Drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading your writing are all essential parts of an effective writing process. Performing these tasks well is an important part of being a good writer, which is why this standard is tested on the EOCT.

The questions for this standard will focus on your ability to recognize the best revisions to poor writing to improve clarity. You will be asked to consider the best way to rewrite awkwardly worded sentences, sentences with misplaced modifiers, and other errors in sentence structure.

Steps in the Writing Process

- Step 1. Prewriting:** Gathering ideas, organizing your thoughts
- Step 2. Drafting:** Creating a rough version of the paper, often more than one
- Step 3. Revising and Editing:** Looking at your draft with a critical eye and making improvements
- Step 4. Proofreading:** Polishing your paper to make sure it is free of errors
- Step 5. Publishing:** Sharing your finished paper with others

Questions for this standard will be based on a passage. For this example, only the first sentence of the passage is included.

Which, if any, would be the BEST way to revise sentence 1?

To meet our friends, my cousin and I went to the movies last night.

- A My cousin and I, last night, we went to the movies to meet our friends.
- B To meet our friends, last night my cousin and I went to the movies.
- C Last night, my cousin and I went to the movies to meet our friends.
- D Leave as is.

The correct answer is choice C because it rewrites the sentence most clearly.

STRATEGY BOX—Lend an Ear

If you can't determine the exact problem with a sentence, don't be afraid to trust your ear and make an educated guess. Many times you can "hear" a problem even if you can't explain exactly what is wrong.

Study Ideas for Content Domain III

To do well on the questions for this domain, you must be able to recognize effective writing and understand the importance of audience and purpose. As you look at passages for the other content domains, consider them in terms of what mode of writing they represent, the purpose the author has for writing the passage, and how you can determine the purpose from the writer's word choice and sentence structure. Basically, to practice for the writing questions on the EOCT, you should analyze the writing you see around you.

You should also go to the library and practice locating sources of information for a topic. It does not have to be a topic for any class assignment. It should be a topic in which you are interested and would like to learn more. Do not, however, limit yourself to one reference source. You will want to examine a variety of reference materials (e.g., almanac, dictionary, thesaurus, and atlas). Look them over and compare their contents. How could each be helpful to someone doing research?

If you have questions about resource materials or the research process, ask your English teacher or a librarian to help you.

Take a Tour

One of the best ways to become a better researcher and better student is to take a guided tour of your library. Ask about a tour at the main desk. Even if you plan to do all your research at the school library, you can usually arrange for a librarian to show you around. You will learn a lot of valuable information that will save you hours of frustration later—things like how to use the library's catalog system, where to find microfilm materials and how to use them, where to find reference books, where to find magazines, and more.

Sample Questions for Content Domain III

This section has some sample questions for you to try. After you have answered each question, the correct answer will be provided, along with an explanation as to why the other answer choices are incorrect.

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

Recreating the World

(1) Plot provides the sequence to a story, and theme tells us about the author’s insight into the human condition, but it is imagery that makes an imaginary world real to readers. (2) Writers use words and phrases that evoke images to recreate a sense of what it feels like to be alive and present in a given situation. (3) For example, a line such as “the cat’s eyes gleam in the moonlight” will most likely bring an image to the reader’s mind. (4) When discussing the literary technique of imagery, most people think of visual imagery, but a good writer employs any kind of imagery that appeals to our five senses. (5) Any novel, poem, or short story is just sunk without imagery.

(6) Auditory images suggest sounds to readers as “heard” in the phrases, the soft cooing of a dove, or the blare of a car’s horn (Berns 45). (7) Gustatory imagery relates to taste. (8) If a character in a story is enjoying a meal, the writer might describe the flavor and texture of sweet corn with butter melting over it. (9) The writer might employ olfactory imagery, the imagery of smell, and tell of the scent of the freshly cooked corn with the steam and melting butter blending together. (10) By using imagery, writers attempt to draw their readers into the stories, so that readers can mentally share what the characters in the stories experience. (11) Ideally, if a character in a novel is hungry, the reader should be, too.

1 Which statement BEST represents the thesis for this passage?

- A** The most effective imagery appeals to all five senses.
- B** Olfactory imagery appeals to our sense of taste.
- C** A good writer must make her readers feel hungry.
- D** Most writers use visual imagery to convey their message.

Answer: **A** Standard: *Demonstrate knowledge of coherent and accurate informational and technical writing*

A thesis is the main idea. Choice **B** presents incorrect information. Choices **C** and **D** relate to specific items mentioned in the passage but do not reflect the entire scope of the passage. The only choice that summarizes the entire passage is choice **A**.

2 What is the MOST precise way to write sentence 9?

- A The writer might employ olfactory imagery—the imagery of smell—and tell of the scent of the freshly cooked corn with the steam and melting butter blending together.
- B Employing olfactory imagery—the imagery of smell—the writer might describe the scent of the freshly cooked corn, the steam, and the melting butter blending together.
- C Because the writer might employ olfactory imagery, the imagery of smell, and tell of the scent of the freshly cooked corn with the steam and melting butter blending together.
- D Leave as is.

Answer: **B** Standard: *Use the writing process to develop, revise, and evaluate writing*

Sentence 9 is a long sentence, and although the sense of it can be ascertained as written, the writing is somewhat confusing and could be structured better. This eliminates choice **D**. Choice **C** starts with the word *Because*, making the whole string of words a dependent clause. Dependent clauses cannot stand alone, so choice **C** is incorrect. This leaves choices **A** and **B**. There are three different scents being discussed, and choice **B** does a better job of placing these in a series by listing them as *the scent of the freshly cooked corn, the steam, and the melting butter*.

3 Which sentence conveys a tone that is inconsistent with the rest of the passage?

- A sentence 2
- B sentence 3
- C sentence 5
- D sentence 11

Answer: **C** Standard: *Organize a writing sample*

Since this passage is written for an academic audience, the language should be more formal than informal. Choice **C**, sentence 5, uses the informal phrase *just sunk* when a more formal phrase like *hurt* or *deeply compromised* should be used. In contrast, choices **A**, **B**, and **D** all use formal language appropriate for the audience.

4 Which transition should be placed at the beginning of sentence 8?

- A As a result,
- B For example,
- C Later,
- D Now,

Answer: **B** Standard: *Use the writing process to develop, revise, and evaluate writing*

Although the question asks what word should be placed at the beginning of sentence 8, the key to answering this question lies in sentence 7. Determining the meaning of sentence 7 will help you pick the correct word with which to begin sentence 8. Sentence 7 mentions *gustatory images*, and sentence 8 then follows with an example of a gustatory image. This makes choice **B**, *For example*, the best answer. It is the only answer choice that creates a logical link between the ideas in sentence 7 and the ideas in sentence 8.

5 Which article would MOST likely support the main idea of this passage?

- A “How the Senses Connect Readers to a Story”
- B “Why Good Writers Must Have Sharp Senses”
- C “Using Visual Imagery to Help Reader Imagine Scenes”
- D “Ways to Use Imagery to Slow Down the Pace of a Story”

Answer: **A** Standard: *Use supporting evidence from multiple sources to develop main ideas within the body of a text*

Choice **B** refers to writers’ own senses, not how the senses are used in writing. Choices **C** and **D** both refer to imagery, but present content different than that of the passage’s main idea. The only choice that supports the main idea of the passage—that imagery draws readers into a story—is choice **A**.

Content Domain IV: Conventions

A LOOK AT CONTENT DOMAIN IV



Test questions in this domain will measure your ability to recognize and apply Standard American English, including grammar, punctuation, and sentence construction, and to understand different writing formats. Your answers to these questions will help show how well you can perform on the following standards:

- Demonstrate understanding of Standard American English
- Apply conventions of Standard American English to formal manuscript requirements

Content Domain IV focuses on your ability to use Standard American English correctly. Questions for this content domain will ask you to revise text to improve organization, purpose, and precision of word choice. Questions will also ask you to correct errors in grammar, usage, mechanics, and manuscript form.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Demonstrate understanding of Standard American English ★

To test your knowledge of Standard American English, you will be asked to identify and correct the grammatical errors in a passage. The list below identifies some of the topics you can expect to see on the EOCT.

- Subject-verb agreement
- Verbs (correct tense, use of irregular verbs)
- Punctuation marks (end punctuation, commas, colons, semicolons, quotation marks, and apostrophes)
- Capitalization
- Plural forms of words
- Precise word choice
- Spelling

- Homonyms
- Double negatives/comparisons
- Pronouns
- Commonly confused words/misused words
- Placement of modifiers

If any of these terms are unfamiliar to you, please talk to your teacher or look them up in a grammar handbook. Each of these topics has a number of subtopics and rules associated with it, so it is important that you use resource materials that will give you this information.

All questions for this domain will be based on passages that contain some errors. Questions will look something like this:

What is the correct way to write this sentence?

Teresa studied for an hour, outlined her paper, and then taking a break.

- A** Teresa studied for an hour, outlined her paper, and then had taking a break.
- B** Teresa studied for an hour, outlined her paper, and then takes a break.
- C** Teresa studied for an hour, outlined her paper, and then took a break.
- D** Teresa studied for an hour, outlined her paper, and then will take a break.

For this question, think about how often you hear people say, “then had taking.” If it sounds odd to you, it is because there is no such verb tense. This means choice **A** is wrong. Choices **B** and **D** don’t seem right either. That is because the verb tense shifts in the sentences. You might not notice this specifically, but you probably sensed there was something strange about saying Teresa “studied” and then “takes” or “will take” a break. Contrast this with choice **C**, which uses the same verb tense throughout. This is the correct answer.

This question also tests **parallelism**, which states that objects linked together have to be similar in tense and number. In this case, the verbs *studied*, *outlined*, and *taking* are a series of actions joined together by the conjunction *and*. However, the sentence in the question is incorrect because the verbs—*studied*, *outlined*, and *taking*—are not in the same tense. Changing *taking* to *took* corrects this problem because now all the verbs, *studied*, *outlined*, and *took*, are in the past tense.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Apply conventions of Standard American English to formal manuscript requirements★

Questions for this standard will also test your knowledge of Standard American English, but they will focus on how well you know formatting requirements for manuscripts. To correctly answer these questions, you should review the *Use Research and Technology to Support Writing* standard in Content Domain III.

You will also be asked questions about how your manuscript should be formatted. These questions may ask you about pagination, spacing, and margins.

Study Ideas for Content Domain IV

To study for this domain, you may want to concentrate on the kinds of errors you typically make in your own writing. (Your teacher may be able to help you with this.) If you know what these errors are, look them up in your grammar book and study the samples. Or, you may want to work through a grammar workbook that will allow you to practice in the areas that need improvement. If you are not sure of your weak areas, you may want to take a look at samples of each topic in your grammar book. (See the list of topics on pages 74 and 75 of this study guide.) If any are not clear to you, work through some practice items in a grammar workbook for those topics.

Sample Questions for Content Domain IV

This section has some sample questions for you to try. After each question, the correct answer is given along with an explanation for why the other answer choices are incorrect.

The following is a draft of a report. Read the report and answer the questions.

Margaret Knight, Inventor Extraordinaire

(1) Most Americans have heard of Alexander Graham Bell. (2) He invented the telephone in 1876 (Macmillan 76). (3) Most Americans, however, have not heard of Margaret Knight. (4) An inventor working in the same time period, Knight created something many people also still use every day—the paper bag.

(5) Margaret Knight, born in 1838, is an inventor from an early age. (6) When she was twelve years old, she is said to have created a stop mechanism for textile looms. (7) If someone got hurt while operating a loom, her invention shut down the machinery.

(8) Knight’s most influential invention was an attachment to a paper bag machine that created a square bottom on the bag. (9) Before her invention, paper bags were shaped like envelopes and could not stand up. (10) Knight later invented a dress and skirt shield, a spit, and have making several inventions for the manufacture of shoes.

(11) With a total of twenty-six patents, Margaret Knight was one of the most prolific inventors in American history. (12) She died, however, with little money and little reknown. (13) Next time you are shopping at a grocery store and ask for a paper bag, you will be giving a shout-out to an overlooked woman.

1 Which is the correct way to write the underlined part of sentence 10?

- A and have made
- B and
- C making
- D Leave as is.

Answer: **B** Standard: *Demonstrate understanding of Standard American English*

“Several inventions for the manufacture of shoes” is another item in a list of nouns in sentence 10. It should be joined to the other items in the list by *and*, which makes choice **B** the correct answer. If you read aloud “and have making,” you know that it doesn’t sound right. Choices **A** and **C** attempt to correct a verb problem, but the real problem is parallelism.

2 Which sentence contains an error in verb tense?

- A sentence 1
- B sentence 4
- C sentence 5
- D sentence 6

Answer: **C** Standard: *Demonstrate understanding of Standard American English*

The correct answer is choice **C**. The past tense should be used. Knight was “an inventor from an early age.” In choice **D**, the tense is correct because “she is said” refers to a claim still made today. The verb tenses in choices **A** and **B** are correct.

3 Which sentence contains a phrase that is too informal for this passage?

- A sentence 1
- B sentence 8
- C sentence 11
- D sentence 13

Answer: **D** Standard: *Demonstrate understanding of Standard American English*

Shout-out is too informal for this informational passage. Choice **D** is the correct answer. The vocabulary in the other sentences is appropriate for this passage.

4 What can the reader tell from the underlined part of sentence 2?

- A The author of the report used a direct quotation from a book written by Macmillan.
- B The author of the report read a book by Macmillan, but did not include information from the book in the report.
- C The author of the report used information from a book by Macmillan that was written in 1976.
- D The author of the report used information from page 76 of a book by Macmillan.

Answer: **D** Standard: *Apply understanding of Standard American English*

Choice **A** is incorrect because if the information from the passage were being quoted directly, it would be in quotation marks. Choice **B** is incorrect because a citation is used when information from a source is being credited. Choice **C** is incorrect because the number 76 in the citation refers to a page number, not the year the book was published. The correct answer is choice **D**. The citation indicates that the author of the report is presenting information that was taken from page 76 of a book written by Macmillan.

5 In which sentence is the underlined word spelled incorrectly?

- A sentence 6
- B sentence 8
- C sentence 11
- D sentence 12

Answer: **D** Standard: *Demonstrate understanding of Standard American English*

Mechanism, influential, and prolific are spelled correctly. *Reknown* in sentence 12 is a misspelling of *renown*. The correct answer is choice **D**.

Appendix A

EOCT Sample Overall Study Plan Sheet

Here is a sample of what an OVERALL study plan might look like. You can use the Blank Overall Study Sheet in Appendix B or create your own.

Materials/Resources I May Need When I Study:

(You can look back at page 2 for ideas.)

1. *This study guide*
2. *Pens*
3. *Highlighter*
4. *Notebook*
5. *Dictionary*
6. *English textbook*

Possible Study Locations:

- First Choice: *The library*
- Second Choice: *My room*
- Third Choice: *My mom's office*

Overall Study Goals:

1. *Read and work through the entire study guide*
2. *Answer the sample questions and study the answers*
3. *Do additional reading in an English textbook*

Number of Weeks I Will Study: *6 weeks*

Number of Days a Week I Will Study: *5 days a week*

Best Study Times for Me:

- Weekdays: *7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.*
- Saturday: *9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.*
- Sunday: *2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.*

Appendix B

Blank Overall Study Plan Sheet

Materials/Resources I May Need When I Study:
(You can look back at page 2 for ideas.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Possible Study Locations:

- First Choice: _____
- Second Choice: _____
- Third Choice: _____

Overall Study Goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Number of Weeks I Will Study: _____

Number of Days a Week I Will Study: _____

Best Study Times for Me: _____

? Weekdays: _____

? Saturday: _____

? Sunday: _____

Appendix C

EOCT Sample Daily Study Plan Sheet

Here is a sample of what a DAILY study plan might look like. You can use the Blank Daily Study Plan Sheet in Appendix D or create your own.

Materials I May Need Today:

1. *Study Guide*
2. *Pen*
3. *Notebook*

Today's Study Location: *The desk in my room*

Study Time Today: *From 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. with a short break at 7:30 p.m.*

(Be sure to consider how long you can actively study in one sitting. Can you sit for 20 minutes? 30 minutes? An hour? If you say you will study for three hours, but get restless after 40 minutes, anything beyond 40 minutes may not be productive—you will most likely fidget and daydream your time away. “Doing time” at your desk doesn’t count for real studying.)

If I start to get tired or lose focus today, I will *do some sit-ups.*

Today's Study Goals and Accomplishments: (Be specific. Include things like number of pages, sections, or standards. The more specific you are, the better able you will be to tell if you reached your goals. Keep it REALISTIC. You will retain more if you study small “chunks” or blocks of material at a time.)

<i>Study Task</i>	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Needs more work</i>	<i>Needs more information</i>
<i>1. Review what I learned last time</i>	X		
<i>2. Study the first standard in Content Domain I</i>	X		
<i>3. Study the second standard in Content Domain I</i>		X	

What I learned today:

1. *The different structures of fiction writing*
2. *How to distinguish between fact and opinion*
3. *The definition of common modes of rhetoric*

Today's reward for meeting my study goals: *Eating some popcorn*

Appendix D

Blank Daily Study Plan Sheet

Materials I May Need Today:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Today's Study Location: _____

Study Time Today: _____

(Be sure to consider how long you can actively study in one sitting. Can you sit for 20 minutes? 30 minutes? An hour? If you say you will study for three hours, but get restless after 40 minutes, anything beyond 40 minutes may not be productive—you will most likely fidget and daydream your time away. "Doing time" at your desk doesn't count for real studying.)

If I start to get tired or lose focus today, I will _____

Today's Study Goals and Accomplishments : (Be specific. Include things like number of pages, sections, or standards. The more specific you are, the better able you will be to tell if you reached your goals. Keep it REALISTIC. You will retain more if you study small "chunks" or blocks of material at a time.)

<i>Study Task</i>	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Needs more work</i>	<i>Needs more information</i>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

What I learned today:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Today's reward for meeting my study goals: _____