

PSSA English Language Arts Test Design

The PSSA English Language Arts test plan shown in the following table is organized by grade and broken down between Multiple-Choice (MC), Evidence-Based Selected Response (EBSR), Short Answer (SA) [G3 only], Writing Prompts (WP), and Text Dependent Analysis (TDA) [G4-8 only]. Core items are also distinguished from items that serve the role of psychometric use and field test (FT). The following tables summarize the ELA test design.

Standard Operational ELA High-Level Test Plan per Form from 2015 Onward

Grade	Selected Response							Constructed Response					Total Core Items	Total Core Points (Raw)	Total Core Points (Weighted)
	Passage-Based Multiple Choice (MC)			Stand Alone MC		Evidence-Based Selected Response (EBSR)		Passage-Based Short-Answer (SA)		Prompt (WP)	Text Dependent Analysis (TDA)				
	Core	Psychometric Use*	Embedded FT	Core	Psychometric Use*	Core	Embedded FT	Core	Embedded FT	Core**	Core**	Embedded FT			
3	20 (4 pass.)	6 (1 pass.)	8 (1 pass.)	18	2	4	2	2	1	1	0	0	42 SR 3 CR	58	62
4	23 (4 pass.)	6 (1 pass.)	8 (1 pass.)	18	2	6	2	0	0	1	1	1	47 SR 2 CR	64	84
5	23 (4 pass.)	6 (1 pass.)	8 (1 pass.)	18	2	6	2	0	0	1	1	1	47 SR 2 CR	64	84
6	23 (4 pass.)	6 (1 pass.)	8 (1 pass.)	18	2	6	2	0	0	1	1	1	47 SR 2 CR	64	84
7	23 (4 pass.)	6 (1 pass.)	8 (1 pass.)	18	2	6	2	0	0	1	1	1	47 SR 2 CR	64	84
8	23 (4 pass.)	6 (1 pass.)	8 (1 pass.)	18	2	6	2	0	0	1	1	1	47 SR 2 CR	64	84

* Psychometric Use is generally for equating purposes. Not all equating items will be unique on all forms. [Passage-based is estimated as 3 total passages for 18 unique MC items across all forms.]

**Weighted (G3: WP x 2; G4-8: WP x 3, TDA x 4)

English Language Arts PSSA Test Content Blueprints

The content blueprints for the PCS-based ELA assessment (beginning with the 2015 PSSA administration) are shown in the following tables. The blueprints are organized around three Reporting Clusters (Reading, Writing, and TDA) based on the expressed emphasis contained within the PCS. As stated in the released PDE Assessment Anchor and Eligible Content documents, the Reporting Categories are as follows:

- A = Literature Text
- B = Informational Text
- C = Writing
- D = Language
- E = Text Dependent Analysis

In addition to the above, the first two Reporting Categories (Literature Text and Informational Text) are understood to be the “Genre Reporting Categories.” The Genre Reporting Categories A and B for ELA will be mapped as part of a dual-alignment into Core Competencies Reporting Categories. There are three themes prevalent throughout the PCS-ELA Standards, and these themes appear in both Literature Text and Informational Text that will appear on the PCS-based PSSA ELA test. The following table shows how the results of specific PCS-based Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content will be mapped to provide for a second layer of reporting. These three additional (dual) Reporting Categories are as follows:

- A-K/B-K: Key Ideas and Details [Key Ideas]
- A-C/B-C: Craft and Structure, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas [CSI]
- A-V/B-V: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use [Vocabulary]

PCS-Based Reporting Summary Table

ELA Reporting Framework, Clusters, and Categories			Reporting Category Code
Reading	Genre	Literature Text	A
		Informational Text	B
	Core Competencies	Key Ideas and Details [Key Ideas]	A-K/B-K
		Craft and Structure, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas [CSI]	A-C/B-C
		Vocabulary Acquisition and Use [Vocabulary]	A-V/B-V
Writing	Writing	C	
	Language	D	
Text Dependent Analysis			E

PCS-based PSSA ELA Blueprint: Dual Reporting for Reporting Categories A and B

Genre Reporting Categories	Core Competencies Reporting Categories		
	Key Ideas and Details (Key Ideas)	Craft and Structure, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (CSI)	Vocabulary Acquisition and Use (Vocabulary)
	A: Literature Text	A-K.1.1.1 A-K.1.1.2 A-K.1.1.3	A-C.2.1.1 A-C.2.1.2 –G6, 7, and 8 only A-C.2.1.3 –G6, 7, and 8 only A-C.3.1.1
B: Informational Text	B-K.1.1.1 B-K.1.1.2 B-K.1.1.3	B-C.2.1.1 B-C.2.1.2 B-C.2.1.3 –G6, 7, and 8 only B-C.3.1.1 B-C.3.1.2 B-C.3.1.3 –G3, 4, and 5 only	B-V.4.1.1 B-V.4.1.2

PCS-based PSSA ELA Blueprint: Reporting Information for Reporting Categories C, D, and E

Reporting Categories	Descriptors		
	Opinion –G3, 4, 5 only Argumentative –G6, 7, 8 only	Informational –G3, 4, 5 only Expository –G6, 7, 8 only	Narrative
C: Writing	C.1.1.1	C.1.2.1	C.1.3.1
	C.1.1.2	C.1.2.2	C.1.3.2
	C.1.1.3	C.1.2.3	C.1.3.3
	C.1.1.4	C.1.2.4	C.1.3.4
	C.1.1.5 –G5, 6, 7, and 8 only	C.1.2.5 –G4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 only	C.1.3.5 –G4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 only
		C.1.2.6 –G5, 6, 7, and 8 only	
D: Language	Grammar and Usage	Capitalization, Punctuation, and Spelling	Conventions
	D.1.1.1	D.1.2.1	D.2.1.1.1
	D.1.1.2	D.1.2.2	D.2.1.1.2 –G4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 only
	D.1.1.3	D.1.2.3	D.2.1.1.3 –G4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 only
	D.1.1.4	D.1.2.4 –G3, 4, 5, 7, and 8 only	D.2.1.1.4 –G5, 6, 7, and 8 only
	D.1.1.5	D.1.2.5 –G3, 5, and 8 only	D.2.1.1.5 –G6, 7, and 8 only
	D.1.1.6	D.1.2.6 –G3 only	D.2.1.1.6 –G8 only
	D.1.1.7		
	D.1.1.8		
	D.1.1.9 –G3, 7, and 8 only		
	D.1.1.10 –G8 only		
D.1.1.11 –G8 only			
E: Text Dependent Analysis	Analysis, Reflection, and Research		
	E.1.1.1 –G4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 only		
	E.1.1.2 –G4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 only		
	E.1.1.3 –G4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 only		
	E.1.1.4 –G4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 only		
	E.1.1.5 –G4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 only		
	E.1.1.6 –G5, 6, 7, and 8 only		

The English Language Arts blueprints are provided in the following two tables.

PCS-based PSSA ELA Blueprint: Percent of the Core by Reporting Category by Grade

Cluster	Reporting Category	Grade					
		3	4	5	6	7	8
Reading	A	24–34%	18–27%	18–27%	18–27%	18–27%	18–27%
	B	24–34%	18–27%	18–27%	18–27%	18–27%	18–27%
Writing	C*	13%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%
	D	29%	21%	21%	21%	21%	21%
TDA	E*		19%	19%	19%	19%	19%
All Areas Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*Reflect the impact of weighted values

PCS-based PSSA ELA Blueprint: Points by Reporting Category by Grade

Cluster	Reporting Category	Grade					
		3	4	5	6	7	8
Reading	A	15–21 pts	15–23 pts	15–23 pts	15–23 pts	15–23 pts	15–23 pts
	B	15–21 pts	15–23 pts	15–23 pts	15–23 pts	15–23 pts	15–23 pts
Writing	C*	8 pts	12 pts	12 pts	12 pts	12 pts	12 pts
	D	18 pts	18 pts	18 pts	18 pts	18 pts	18 pts
TDA	E*		16 pts	16 pts	16 pts	16 pts	16 pts
All Areas Total Core		62 pts	84 pts	84 pts	84 pts	84 pts	84 pts

*Reflect the impact of weighted values

ELA Test Development Design

At grade 3, the PCS-ELA core can be described as:

20 core passage MC items	20 points
18 core standalone MC items	18 points
2 core 2 pt EBSR items	4 points
2 core 3 pt EBSR items	6 points
2 core 3 pt SA items	6 points
1 core 4 pt WP (weighted x2)	8 points
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Total	62 points

As shown in the operational layout tables below, the PSSA ELA test will be four (4) sections starting in 2015. Due to the different roles of Short Answer (SA) and Text Dependent Analysis (TDA) items, the design for grade 3 differs from the design of grades 4 through 8. SA items are used at grade 3 only, and TDA prompts are used at grades 4 through 8 only.

ELA Operational Section Layout Plan for Grade 3

Section	Content Emphasis	Number of MC/EBSR	Number of WP/SA	Estimated Number of Passages	Estimated Section Testing Time (in minutes)
1	Writing and Language	20 MC	1	0	60
2	Reading	8–12 MC 1–3 EBSR	1	2	34–50
3	Reading	14 MC 2 EBSR	1	2	48
4	Reading	8–12 MC 1–3 EBSR	1	2	34–50

At grades 4 through 8, the PCS-ELA core can be described as:

23 core passage MC items	23 points
18 core standalone MC items	18 points
3 core 2 pt EBSR items	6 points
3 core 3 pt EBSR items	9 points
1 core 4 pt TDA (weighted x4)	16 points
1 core 4 pt WP (weighted x3)	12 points
Total	84 points

ELA Operational Section Layout Plan for Grades 4 through 8

Section	Content Emphasis	Number of MC/EBSR	Number of WP/TDA	Estimated Number of Passages	Estimated Section Testing Time (in minutes)
1	Writing and Language	20 MC	1	0	60
2	Reading	15–18 MC 4–5 EBSR	0	3	58–69
3	Reading and Text Dependent Analysis	14 MC 2 EBSR	1	2	73
4	Reading and Text Dependent Analysis	5–8 MC 1–2 EBSR	1	1	48–57