

# NC Standard Course of Study (NCSCS) for English Language Arts



## End-of Grade Grades 3–8 English Language Arts/Reading and End-of-Course English II

### North Carolina Assessment Specifications

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#### Purpose of the Assessments

- Edition 4 End-of-Grade (EOG) English Language Arts (ELA) assessments and the End-of-Course (EOC) English II assessments will measure students' proficiency on the [NC Standard Course of Study \(NCSCS\) for English Language Arts](#), adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education in June 2010.
- NC State Board of Education Policy [Requirements Regarding End-of-Course Assessments](#) (TEST-003) directs schools to use the results from all operational EOC assessments as at least twenty percent (20%) of the student's final course grade.
- Assessment results will be used for school and district accountability under the READY Accountability Model and for Federal reporting purposes.

#### Curriculum Cycle

- June 2010: North Carolina State Board of Education adoption of the NCSCS
- 2010–2011: Item development for the Next Generation of Assessments, Edition 4
- 2011–2012: Administration of stand-alone field tests of Edition 4 assessments
- 2012–2013: Operational administration of Edition 4 assessments aligned to the NCSCS

#### Standards

- The NCSCS is divided into 4 strands: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language.
- Every grade has a set of content standards that define what all students are expected to know and be able to do by the end of the grade.

#### Developing Assessments

- North Carolina educators were recruited and trained to write new items. The diversity among the item writers and their knowledge of the current standards was addressed during recruitment. Trained North Carolina educators also review items and suggest improvements, if necessary. The use of North Carolina educators to develop and review items strengthens the instructional validity of the items.
- For an in-depth explanation of the test development process see State Board Policy [Multiple-Choice Test Development \(TEST-013\)](#) or reference the [Test Development Process: Item, Selection and Form Development](#).

### Prioritization of Standards

- Members of the NCDPI/Test Development Section invited North Carolina educators to collaborate and develop recommendations for a prioritization of the standards indicating the relative importance of each standard, the anticipated instructional time, and the appropriateness of the standard for a multiple-choice or constructed response item format. Subsequently, curriculum and test development staff from the NCDPI met to review the results from the teacher panels and to develop weight distributions across the domains for each grade level. *Tables 1–3* describe the range of total items that will appear on the assessments.

*Table 1: Weight Distributions for Grades 3–5*

<b>Strand</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
Reading for Literature	32–37%	30–34%	36–40%
Reading for Informational Text	41–45%	45–49%	37–41%
Reading Foundation Skills	NA	NA	NA
Writing	NA	NA	NA
Speaking and Listening	NA	NA	NA
Language	20–24%	19–21%	21–25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Table 2: Weight Distributions for Grades 6–8*

<b>Strand</b>	<b>Grade 6</b>	<b>Grade 7</b>	<b>Grade 8</b>
Reading for Literature	32–36%	34–38%	31–35%
Reading for Informational Text	41–45%	41–45%	42–46%
Writing	NA	NA	NA
Speaking and Listening	NA	NA	NA
Language	21–25%	19–23%	20–24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Table 3: Weight Distributions for High School English II*

<b>Strand</b>	<b>English II</b>
Reading for Literature	30–34%
Reading for Informational Text	32–38%
Writing	14–18%
Speaking and Listening	NA
Language	14–18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

- Appendices A–G show the number of operational items by standard. Note that future coverage of standards could vary within the constraints of the content category weights in *Tables 1–3*.

### **Cognitive Rigor and Item Complexity**

Assessment items has been designed, developed, and classified to ensure that the cognitive rigor of the operational test forms align to the cognitive complexity and demands of the NCSCS for English Language Arts. These items will require students to not only recall information, but also apply concepts and skills, make decisions, and explain or justify their thinking.

### **Types of Items and Supplemental Materials**

- The grades 3–8 ELA/reading assessments will consist of four-response-option multiple-choice items. Multiple-choice items will be worth one point each.
- The English II assessment will consist of four-response-option multiple-choice items, technology-enhanced items (online mode only), and constructed-response items.
- The English II assessment will include four constructed response items. One constructed response item is an embedded field test item and will not be included in the student’s score but will be used for purposes of developing items for future test forms. Three constructed response items are operational and will be included in the student’s score.
- The constructed response items will be short answer and can typically be answered well in a paragraph or less. These short answer items will be worth two points each. Students will write their responses on the lines provided on the answer sheet. Students must not write beyond the end of the lines or in the margins. Words written in the margins or unlined areas of the answer sheet will not be scored. Students must not add more lines to the answer sheet. Words written on extra lines will not be scored. Scorers only review for the specific criteria as stated in the item. Additional information not required in the answer does not increase the student’s score.
- All students must be provided blank paper.
- Released items are available on the [NCDPI/Accountability Services Division](#) website. Released items may be used by school systems to help acquaint students with items. The released items may not reflect the breadth of the standards assessed and/or the range of item difficulty found on the EOG assessments. These materials must not be used for personal or financial gain. The released items for grades 6-8 are also available to schools through NCTest, the NCDPI’s online assessment platform.

### Testing Structure and Test Administration Time

- Included in the total item counts are embedded field test items that will not be included in the score but will be used for purposes of developing items for future test forms.

Grade Level or Course	Number of Operational Items*	Number of Field Test Items*	Total Number of Items
Grade 3	44 MC	8 MC	52
Grade 4	44 MC	8 MC	52
Grade 5	44 MC	8 MC	52
Grade 6	48 MC	8 MC	56
Grade 7	48 MC	8 MC	56
Grade 8	48 MC	8 MC	56
English II	50 MC 3 CR	14 MC 1 CR	68

\*MC=Multiple-Choice Item, CR=Constructed Response

- The NCDPI estimates it will take 180 minutes for nearly all students to complete the EOG assessments. The NCDPI estimates it will take 150 minutes for nearly all students to complete the EOC English II assessment. The NCDPI requires all students be allowed ample opportunity to complete the assessment. The maximum amount of time allowed is 240 minutes except for students with documented special needs requiring accommodations, such as *Scheduled Extended Time*. Refer to the [North Carolina Test Coordinators' Policies and Procedures Handbook](#) for additional information.

### Test Cycle and Delivery Mode

- The EOG assessment must be administered during the last ten days of the school year. All student in membership at grades 3-8 (according to PowerSchool) are expected to participate with or without accommodations in the standard administration of the assessment. Refer to the [North Carolina Test Coordinators' Policies and Procedures Handbook](#) for exceptions.
- The EOC English II assessment must be administered during the last five (5) days (4x4/semester courses/summer school) or the last ten (10) days (traditional yearlong schedule) of the instructional period. According to State Board of Education policy [Requirements Regarding End-of-Course Assessments](#) (TEST-003), students who are enrolled for credit in courses in which EOC assessments are required shall take the appropriate assessment at the completion of the course. Refer to the [North Carolina Test Coordinators' Policies and Procedures Handbook](#) for additional information.

- The grades 3–8 assessments will be designed for a paper-and-pencil administration. The grade 7 assessment will be available for online administration effective with the 2014–15 spring administration. The grade 8 assessment will be available for online administration effective with the 2015–16 spring administration. The grade 6 assessment will be available for online administration effective with the 2016–17 spring administration. The assessments for grades 3–5 will be available for online administration effective with the 2017–18 spring administration.
- The EOC English II assessment will be administered through NCTest, the NCDPI’s online assessment platform. Paper editions are available.
- Schools must ensure every student participating in an online assessment for the North Carolina Testing Program completes the Online Assessment Tutorial for the associated assessment at least once at the school before test day. The tutorial provides students the opportunity to practice the mechanics of navigating through the testing platform, to become familiar with the tools, and to respond to the sample items. Refer to the [North Carolina Test Coordinators’ Policies and Procedures Handbook](#) for additional information.
- The end-of-grade and end-of-course assessments are only provided in English. Native language translation versions are not available. [Chapter 115C-81 Basic Education Program](#) of the North Carolina General Statutes requires all teachers and principals to conduct classes except foreign language classes in English.

### **Alternate Assessment**

- The *NCEXTENDI* alternate assessment is a performance-based alternate assessment designed to assess students with significant cognitive disabilities who are being taught using the Extended Content Standards. The *NCEXTENDI* alternate assessment items are grade-level, performance-based, multiple-choice items that measure the standards specified in the [North Carolina Extended Content Standards](#).
- Eligibility criteria and additional information is available in the *2016 Testing Students with Disabilities: North Carolina Testing Program* document available on the [Accountability Services/Testing Students with Disabilities](#) web page.
- The *NCEXTENDI* alternate assessments will consist of fifteen performance-based, multiple-choice items. All items will be worth one point each.

### **Additional Resources**

- Achievement level information is available at the NCDPI/[Achievement Level Information](#) page.
- A sample Individual Student Report is available at the NCDPI/[Individual Student Report Documents \(ISRs\)](#) page.

**Appendix A**  
**Grade 3 English Language Arts/Reading**  
**Number of Operational Items by Standard**

The following table shows the approximate number of operational items for each standard. Note that future coverage of standards could vary within the constraints of the content category weights in *Tables 1-3*. Some standards not designated with tested items (i.e., “–”) may be a prerequisite standard, may be tested within the context of another standard or may be included as an embedded field test item.

<u>Grade 3 Standard</u>	Number of Operational Items by Standard
RL.1 (Reading for Literature)	3-5
RL.2	1-2
RL.3	4-7
RL.4	2-6
RL.5	–
RL.6	–
RL.7	–
RL.9	–
RL.10	–
L.1 (Language)	–
L.2	–
L.3	–
L.4.a	6-9
L.4.b	–
L.4.c	–
L.4.d	–
L.5.a	1-4
L.5.b	–
L.6	–
RI.1 (Reading for Informational Text)	3-7
RI.2	2-4
RI.3	3-4
RI.4	2-4
RI.5	–
RI.6	–
RI.7	2-5
RI.8	1-3
RI.9	–
RI.10	–

**Appendix B**  
**Grade 4 English Language Arts/Reading**  
**Number of Operational Items by Standard**

The following table shows the approximate number of operational items for each standard. Note that future coverage of standards could vary within the constraints of the content category weights in *Tables 1-3*. Some standards not designated with tested items (i.e., “–”) may be a prerequisite standard, may be tested within the context of another standard or may be included as an embedded field test item.

<u>Grade 4 Standard</u>	Number of Operational Items by Standard
RL.1 (Reading for Literature)	4-6
RL.2	1-4
RL.3	2-4
RL.4	2-5
RL.5	–
RL.6	–
RL.7	–
RL.9	–
RL.10	–
L.1 (Language)	–
L.2	–
L.3	–
L.4.a	5-7
L.4.b	–
L.4.c	–
L.4.d	–
L.5.a	2-4
L.5.b	–
L.6	–
RI.1 (Reading for Informational Text)	3-6
RI.2	3-4
RI.3	4-5
RI.4	2-3
RI.5	2-3
RI.6	–
RI.7	0-5
RI.8	1-4
RI.9	–
RI.10	–

**Appendix C**  
**Grade 5 English Language Arts/Reading**  
**Number of Operational Items by Standard**

The following table shows the approximate number of operational items for each standard. Note that future coverage of standards could vary within the constraints of the content category weights in *Tables 1-3*. Some standards not designated with tested items (i.e., “–”) may be a prerequisite standard, may be tested within the context of another standard or may be included as an embedded field test item.

<u>Grade 5 Standard</u>	Number of Operational Items by Standard
RL.1 (Reading for Literature)	4-7
RL.2	1-5
RL.3	2-7
RL.4	3-4
RL.5	–
RL.6	1-3
RL.7	–
RL.9	–
RL.10	–
L.1 (Language)	–
L.2	–
L.3	–
L.4.a	3-6
L.4.b	–
L.4.c	–
L.4.d	–
L.5.a	2-7
L.5.b	–
L.6	–
RI.1 (Reading for Informational Text)	5-7
RI.2	1-4
RI.3	3-7
RI.4	3-5
RI.5	–
RI.6	–
RI.7	–
RI.8	2-3
RI.9	–
RI.10	–



**Appendix D**  
**Grade 6 English Language Arts/Reading**  
**Number of Operational Items by Standard**

The following table shows the approximate number of operational items for each standard. Note that future coverage of standards could vary within the constraints of the content category weights in *Tables 1-3*. Some standards not designated with tested items (i.e., “–”) may be a prerequisite standard, may be tested within the context of another standard or may be included as an embedded field test item.

<u>Grade 6 Standard</u>	Number of Operational Items by Standard
RL.1 (Reading for Literature)	3-4
RL.2	1-3
RL.3	2-5
RL.4	2-5
RL.5	3-4
RL.6	0-1
RL.7	–
RL.9	–
RL.10	–
L.1 (Language)	–
L.2	–
L.3	–
L.4.a	4-7
L.4.b	–
L.4.c	–
L.4.d	–
L.5.a	4-7
L.5.b	–
L.6	–
RI.1 (Reading for Informational Text)	3-6
RI.2	2-4
RI.3	1-3
RI.4	1-4
RI.5	2-4
RI.6	1-4
RI.7	–
RI.8	1-3
RI.9	–
RI.10	–

**Appendix E**  
**Grade 7 English Language Arts/Reading**  
**Number of Operational Items by Standard**

The following table shows the approximate number of operational items for each standard. Note that future coverage of standards could vary within the constraints of the content category weights in *Tables 1-3*. Some standards not designated with tested items (i.e., “–”) may be a prerequisite standard, may be tested within the context of another standard or may be included as an embedded field test item.

<u>Grade 7 Standard</u>	Number of Operational Items by Standard
RL.1 (Reading for Literature)	3-5
RL.2	2-3
RL.3	1-4
RL.4	5-7
RL.5	1-2
RL.6	1-2
RL.7	–
RL.9	–
RL.10	–
L.1 (Language)	–
L.2	–
L.3	–
L.4.a	4-5
L.4.b	–
L.4.c	–
L.4.d	–
L.5.a	4-6
L.5.b	–
L.6	–
RI.1 (Reading for Informational Text)	4-5
RI.2	1-3
RI.3	2-5
RI.4	2-4
RI.5	3-4
RI.6	2-4
RI.7	–
RI.8	2-3
RI.9	–
RI.10	–

**Appendix F**  
**Grade 8 English Language Arts/Reading**  
**Number of Operational Items by Standard**

The following table shows the approximate number of operational items for each standard. Note that future coverage of standards could vary within the constraints of the content category weights in *Tables 1-3*. Some standards not designated with tested items (i.e., “–”) may be a prerequisite standard, may be tested within the context of another standard or may be included as an embedded field test item.

<u>Grade 8 Standard</u>	Number of Operational Items by Standard
RL.1 (Reading for Literature)	3-5
RL.2	4-6
RL.3	1-4
RL.4	4-5
RL.5	–
RL.6	0-3
RL.7	–
RL.9	–
RL.10	–
L.1 (Language)	–
L.2	–
L.3	–
L.4.a	3-5
L.4.b	–
L.4.c	–
L.4.d	–
L.5.a	5-7
L.5.b	–
L.6	–
RI.1 (Reading for Informational Text)	4-5
RI.2	1-3
RI.3	2-3
RI.4	1-2
RI.5	4-5
RI.6	4-5
RI.7	–
RI.8	2-4
RI.9	–
RI.10	–

**Appendix G**  
**English II**  
**Number of Operational Items by Standard**

The following table shows the approximate number of operational items for each standard. Note that future coverage of standards could vary within the constraints of the content category weights in *Tables 1-3*. Some standards not designated with tested items (i.e., “–”) may be a prerequisite standard, may be tested within the context of another standard or may be included as an embedded field test item.

<u>English II Standard</u>	Number of Operational Items by Standard
RL.1 (Reading for Literature)	3-9
RL.2	2-5
RL.3	0-4
RL.4	3-6
RL.5	1-3
RL.6	1-4
RL.7	–
RL.9	–
RL.10	–
L.1 (Language)	–
L.2	–
L.3.a	–
L.4.a	4-6
L.4.b	–
L.4.c	–
L.4.d	–
L.5.a	2-4
L.5.b	–
L.6	–
RI.1 (Reading for Informational Text)	3-7
RI.2	2-4
RI.3	1-5
RI.4	3-7
RI.5	2-5
RI.6	3-6
RI.7	–
RI.8	–
RI.9	–
RI.10	–
W.1 (Writing)	–
W.4	–
W.9.a	1-2
W.9.b	1-2

## EOG and EOC ELA Assessments Specifications—Document History

Date	Comment	Revision Location	Revision Description
June 2012	Original document posted	N/A	N/A
December 2013	Additional information added	Curriculum Cycle	<i>2012–2013: Operational administration of Edition 4 assessments aligned to the NCSCS</i>
March 2015	Additional information added	Delivery Mode	<i>The grade 7 assessment will also be available for online administration effective with the 2014–15 spring administration.</i>
		Appendices A-G	Tables reporting the number of items by standard were added.
March 2016	Additional information added	Delivery Mode	<i>The grade 8 assessment will be available for online administration effective with the 2015–16 spring administration.</i>
		Delivery Mode	<i>End-of-grade and end-of-course assessments are only provided in English. Native language translation versions are not available.</i>
March 2017	Additional information added	Developing Assessments (p. 1)	This section was added to the document.
		Types of Items and Supplemental Materials (p. 3)	Information about supplemental materials and the released forms was added to the document.
		Testing Structure and Test Administration Time (p. 4)	This section was added to the document.
		Test Cycle and Delivery Mode (p. 4)	Information about the test cycle was added. Online administrations are available for grade 6 effective with the 2016–17 spring administration and for grades 3-5 effective with the 2017–18 spring administration. Information about the Online Assessment Tutorial was added.
		Alternate Assessment (p. 5)	This section was added to the document.
		Additional Resources (p. 5)	This section was added to the document.

**EOG and EOC ELA Assessments Specifications—Document History** (continued)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Revision Location</b>	<b>Revision Description</b>
March 2017 (continued)	Revision	Appendices A-G (pp. 6-12)	The information in the <i>Number of Operational Items by Standard</i> column was revised to include all assessment forms for the specified grade level or course. Note: The coverage of standards remains within the original constraints of the weight distribution as reported in <i>Tables 1-3</i> .
		Multiple pages	Hyperlinks were updated and formatting was adjusted as needed.