Sample Booklet
Grade 1
Reading

Lori Mammen
Editorial Director

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STAAR MASTER® Student Practice Book—Reading, Grade 1

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STAAR MASTER® Student Practice Book, Teacher Guide—Reading, Grade 1

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What’s Inside the Student Practice Book?

ECS Learning Systems strives to provide the most complete, up-to-date, accurate materials for STAAR® (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) preparation. Many teachers have requested similar materials to use with students at grade levels not included in the state’s testing program. In response to these requests, ECS Learning Systems has developed this STAAR MASTER® Student Practice Book for Reading, Grade 1, with a larger font size for ease of reading and simpler language and fewer answer choices for younger students.

The STAAR MASTER Student Practice Book provides practice and review material for the Grade 1 Reading TEKS. (Note: Some TEKS were omitted from this Student Practice Book because they were not easily incorporated in this format at this grade level.)

• The reading passages reflect the kinds of passages students might encounter on the actual STAAR assessment, beginning in Grade 3. These include the following types of selections: fictional literary texts (stories and poems), informational texts (expository passages), and media literacy texts (newspapers, advertisements, blogs, and Web pages).
• The reading passages cover a broad range of topics and ideas of interest to first-grade students.
• Several readability formulas were used to ensure that the texts are appropriate for first grade.
• The questions that follow a passage focus on the 2011 ELA-R Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (Texas Education Agency, 2011) reading standards.
• Each question is labeled for easy identification of the TEKS-based standard and expectation addressed in the question. The tag also notes the complexity level of the item. (For more information about complexity levels, refer to Box 1, “Descriptions of STAAR MASTER® Complexity Levels,” page 5).

The following types of selections appear in the STAAR MASTER Student Practice Book.

Fictional literary texts include stories and poems. These selections present an obvious progression of ideas. For example, a story would have a clear beginning, middle, and end.

Informational texts include expository passages. Expository selections give information about topics in science, social studies, art, or other curricular areas.

Media literacy texts include text from various forms of media, such as newspapers, advertisements, blogs, and Web pages. These selections present information through words, images, and graphics and relate information for specific audiences and purposes. All elements of a text work together to communicate a message.

Practice-Item Skills Tags
Each practice item is labeled with a "skills tag" (see Figure 1, below) for easy identification of the TEKS-based standard and expectation addressed in the question. The tag also notes the complexity level of the item. (For more information about complexity levels, refer to Box 1, “Descriptions of STAAR MASTER® Complexity Levels,” page 5).

![Figure 1: Practice-Item Skills Tag](image)

This Teacher Guide includes—

• an overview of the Student Practice Book and key characteristics of the STAAR program
• descriptions of STAAR MASTER complexity levels
• strategies for test preparation and reading instruction
• a master list of the ELA-R TEKS reading standards and expectations addressed in the Student Practice Book
• a correlation chart
• a complete answer key (with corresponding complexity levels for the items in each passage)
Figure 19
The standards listed under TEKS "Figure 19" are important metacognitive reading skills that students will continue to apply (in greater depth and using increasingly complex texts) as they advance in grade level (Texas Education Agency, 2010b). Figure 19 standards are meant to be used with all text types and during both assigned and independent reading (see Figure 2, below).

Increased Rigor
The STAAR® program is described as "significantly more rigorous" (Texas Education Agency, 2010a) than the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). But what does rigor mean in assessment? For the STAAR program, it means the cognitive complexity of items will increase to assess skills at a greater depth. The STAAR MASTER® Student Practice Book provides items written at varying levels of complexity to accommodate this increase in rigor. (Refer to the "Depth of Knowledge" section on this page and Box 1, "Descriptions of STAAR MASTER® Complexity Levels," page 5 for more information about the levels of complexity in practice items.)

Depth of Knowledge
Norman Webb’s (2002a) “depth-of-knowledge” model is currently one of the most influential alignment models in the field of education. "Depth of knowledge" describes the degree of complexity of knowledge a curricular item requires. Webb identifies four levels of depth of knowledge: recall (Level 1), skill or concept (Level 2), strategic thinking (Level 3), and extended thinking (Level 4). Distinct cognitive demands occur during each activity, or thinking process, level.

The items in the STAAR MASTER® Student Practice Book were aligned to the TEKS using a modified version of the “depth-of-knowledge” model (see Box 1, “Descriptions of STAAR MASTER® Complexity Levels,” page 5). During the alignment process, the complexity level of each item (designated “Low,” “Moderate,” or “High”) was determined. The level can be found in the skills tag of each practice item and in the Answer Key.

Figure 2: Practice Item for Reading Comprehension Skills (Figure 19)

7. How does Mouse most likely learn to follow the bone?
   - A. He watches the other animals play.
   - B. He is stronger than the other animals.
   - C. He can see better than the other animals.
Descriptions of STAAR MASTER® Complexity Levels

The following descriptions provide an overview of the three complexity levels used to align the STAAR MASTER® Student Practice Book items to the TEKS. Each explanation details the kinds of activities that occur within each level. However, they do not represent all of the possible thought processes for each level.

Low Complexity (L)
Low-complexity items align with the TEKS at Level 1 of the Webb (2002a) model. Items of low complexity may involve recalling—but not analyzing—story events and other basic elements of a text structure. An item may ask students to recognize or reproduce—but not interpret—figurative language. Items of this complexity may require identifying the meaning of a word through language structure or word relationships. At this cognitive level, students may need to locate details in a chart, graph, or diagram. A low-complexity item may ask students to recall, identify, arrange, locate, or define information and concepts.

Moderate Complexity (M)
Moderate-complexity items align with the TEKS at Level 2 of the Webb model. Items of moderate complexity involve both comprehension and the subsequent processing of text. Students are asked to make inferences and identify cause-and-effect relationships. However, students are not required to go beyond the text. Major concepts, such as main idea, are considered in a literal, rather than abstract, manner. Students are asked to compare word meanings, which they determine through context clues. At this cognitive level, students will need to identify similarities and differences. Items may involve relating information in a text feature, such as a chart, graph, or diagram. Items of this complexity may ask students to predict, organize, classify, compare, interpret, distinguish, relate, or summarize. Some items also require students to apply low-complexity skills and concepts.

High Complexity (H)
High-complexity items align with the TEKS at Level 3 and/or Level 4 of the Webb model*. Items of high complexity require students to use strategic, multi-step thinking; develop a deeper understanding of the text; and extend thinking beyond the text. Major concepts, such as theme and figurative language, are now identified and examined in an abstract manner. Students are asked to demonstrate more flexible thinking, apply prior knowledge, and support their responses. Students may need to generalize and transfer new information to new tasks. High-complexity items may require students to make inferences across an entire passage or analyze relationships between ideas or texts. At this cognitive level, students will need to analyze similarities and differences. Items may involve relating information in a text feature, such as a chart, graph, or diagram, to the text. A high-complexity item may ask students to plan, reason, explain, hypothesize, compare, differentiate, draw conclusions, cite evidence, analyze, synthesize, apply, or prove. Some items also require students to apply low- and/or moderate-complexity skills and concepts.

*Note: Although state standards may include expectations that require extended thinking, many large-scale assessment activities are not classified as Level 4. Performance and open-ended assessment may require activities at Level 4.

Box 1: Descriptions of STAAR MASTER® Complexity Levels

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How to Use This Book

Effective Test Preparation

What is the most effective way to prepare students for any reading competency test? Experienced educators know that the best test preparation includes three critical components—

• a strong curriculum that is aligned with the content and skills to be assessed
• effective, relevant, and varied instructional methods that allow students to learn content and skills in many different ways
• targeted practice that familiarizes students with the specific content and format of the test

Obviously, a strong curriculum and effective, relevant, and varied instructional methods provide the foundation for all appropriate test preparation. Contrary to what some might believe, merely “teaching the test” performs a great disservice to students. Students must acquire knowledge, practice skills, and have specific educational experiences that can never be included on tests limited by time and in scope. For this reason, resources like the STAAR MASTER® Student Practice Book should never become the heart of the curriculum or replace strong instructional methods.

Targeted Practice

The STAAR MASTER Student Practice Book does, however, address the final element of effective test preparation (targeted test practice). This book familiarizes students with the general format of competency tests.

When students become familiar with the format of a test, they know what to expect on the actual test. This, in turn, improves their chances for success.

Using STAAR MASTER® Products

Used as part of the regular curriculum, the STAAR MASTER Student Practice Book allows teachers to—

• determine students’ areas of strength and/or weakness
• provide meaningful test-taking practice for students
• ease students’ test anxiety
• communicate test expectations and content to parents

Other Suggestions for Instruction

The STAAR MASTER Student Practice Book can serve as a springboard for other effective instructional activities that help with test preparation.

Group Work

Teachers and students work through selected practice exercises together, noting the kinds of questions and the range of answer choices. They discuss common errors for each kind of question and strategies for avoiding these errors.

Predicting Answers

Students predict the correct answer before reading the given answer choices. This encourages students to think through the question rather than focus on finding the right answer. Students then read the given answer choices and determine which one, if any, matches the answer they have given.

Developing Test Questions

Once students become familiar with the format of test questions, they develop “test-type” questions for other assigned reading (e.g., science, social studies).

Vocabulary Development

Teachers and students foster vocabulary development in all subject areas through the use of word walls, word webs, word games, synonym/antonym charts, analogies, word categories, “word-of-the-day” activities, etc.

Two-Sentence Recaps

Students regularly summarize what they have read in one or two sentences. For fiction, students use the basic elements (setting, characters, problem, solution) to guide their summaries. For nonfiction, students use the journalist’s questions (who, what, where, when, why) for the same purpose. The teacher may also list three to five key words from a reading selection and direct students to write a one- to two-sentence summary that includes the given words.

Generalizations

After students read a selection, the teacher states a generalization based on the reading, and students provide specific facts and details to support the generalization; or the teacher provides specifics from the selection, and students state the generalization.
STAAR MASTER® Reading References

*All Web sites listed were active at time of publication.


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Selected pages from

STAAR MASTER®

Student Practice Book
Reading, Grade 1
for the State of Texas Assessments
of Academic Readiness

Lori Mammen
Editorial Director

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You Could Outrun a Cheetah!

1. Picture a race between a human and a cheetah. A human can run about 28 miles per hour. A cheetah can run 60 miles per hour. Most people would think the cheetah would win the race. But it depends on how far they run.

Cooling Down

2. A cheetah runs at top speed for short distances. It overheats if it runs any longer. Cheetahs pant to cool down. They stick out their tongues. They suck in air. It takes a long time to cool off this way. They are made to run short distances.

3. A marathon is a race that is over 26 miles. A human will win this kind of race. Humans sweat to cool down. The body cools down when air hits wet skin. Humans can run and sweat at the same time. It does not take extra time. They are made to run long distances.

Our Bodies

4. Humans have long leg bones. They have strong leg muscles. It is easy for humans to keep their balance. It is easy to stay upright. Their feet bounce as they run. Their toes grip the ground. These things also help them run for a long time.

Beating Other Animals

5. Humans can beat other animals, too. In one race, humans ran against riders on horseback. A human runner won the race. He beat the horses!
Standard 6 (Compound Words) L

1. What does the word overheats mean in paragraph 2?
   ○ A Gets too hot
   ○ B Is not very hot
   ○ C Gets hot again and again

Standard 6 (Compound Words) L

2. What does the word upright mean in paragraph 4?
   ○ A Active
   ○ B Lying down
   ○ C Standing

Standard 14 (Main Idea) M

3. This passage is mainly about—
   ○ A times a person has won a race against an animal
   ○ B ways a person’s body and an animal’s body are the same
   ○ C things that help a person run longer than an animal

Standard 14 (Facts/Details) L

4. A marathon is a race that a human would most likely—
   ○ A tie with an animal if the two were racing
   ○ B win against an animal if the two were racing
   ○ C lose against an animal if the two were racing

1.R.C.D (Inferences) H

5. Sweating cools down a human faster than panting cools down a cheetah because a human—
   ○ A sweats all the time
   ○ B forces his body to sweat
   ○ C does not have to stop what he is doing to sweat
6. Under which heading would you find out if a human has won a race against another type of animal?
   - A. Cooling Down
   - B. Our Bodies
   - C. Beating Other Animals

7. Why did the author most likely write this passage?
   - A. To prove that cheetahs are not fast runners
   - B. To tell ways a human is a faster runner than some animals
   - C. To talk about different animals that are not as fast as a human
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