SAMPLE BOOKLET
GRADE 2
READING

Lori Mammen
Editorial Director

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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 2, with a larger font size for ease of reading and simpler language for younger students.

The STAAR MASTER® Student Practice Book provides practice and review material for the Grade 2 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 second-grade students.
- Several readability formulas were used to ensure that the texts are appropriate for second 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.
- Several questions throughout the book address the same standard/expectation, providing repeated practice for students in a variety of contexts.

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).

**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 on 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.

9. The writer of this passage would probably say that all birthday customs are meant to be—
   ○ A the same
   ○ B strange
   ○ C scary
   ○ D fun

Figure 2: Practice Item for Reading Comprehension Skills (Figure 19)
Descriptions of STAAR MASTER® Complexity Levels

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. At this cognitive level, students need to locate details in a chart, graph, or diagram. A moderate-complexity item 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 need to locate details in a chart, graph, or diagram. 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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Why Evergreen Trees Keep Their Leaves

1 Once upon a time, a little bird had a broken wing. He couldn’t fly up to his warm nest. He looked around for a warm place to stay.

2 “Maybe the trees will keep me warm,” he said. A silver birch was the first tree he saw.

3 “Birch tree,” said the bird, “will you keep me warm?”

4 “I must take care of my leaves. Go away!” said the birch.

5 The little bird hopped and fluttered until he came to an oak tree.

6 “Oak tree,” said the bird, “will you keep me warm?”

7 “You’ll eat my acorns. Go away!” said the oak.

8 Once again, the little bird hopped and fluttered until he came to a willow tree.

9 “Willow tree,” said the bird, “will you keep me warm?”

10 “I don’t know you, and I never talk to strangers. Go away!” said the willow.

11 The little bird hopped and fluttered until a spruce tree saw him.

12 “Where are you going, little bird?” asked the spruce.

13 “I don’t know,” answered the bird. “Those trees won’t help me! My wing is broken so I can’t fly very far.”

14 “I will keep you warm,” said the spruce. “I’ll like having you here.”
A pine tree stood nearby. “My branches are not very warm, but I can block the wind.”

The little bird fluttered up into the branches of the spruce, and the pine tree kept the wind away from the little bird. Then the juniper tree offered to feed the bird.

“My berries are good for birds,” said the juniper.

The little bird was soon very comfortable.

The other trees talked to one another.

“I wouldn’t take care of a bird,” said the birch.

“I wouldn’t risk my acorns,” said the oak.

“I wouldn’t speak to strangers,” said the willow.

That night, North Wind came to the woods. He blew his icy breath on some of the trees. All the leaves fell to the ground.

“May I touch every tree?” North Wind asked the Frost King.

“No,” said the Frost King. “These evergreen trees should keep their leaves. They use them to help others.”

So, the spruce, the pine, and the juniper kept their leaves through the winter—and have done so ever since.
Standard 5 (Context Clues) M

1. What does the word strangers mean in paragraph 10?
   - A Those who visit the willow
   - B Those the willow does not know
   - C Those who bother the willow
   - D Those who are mean to the willow

Standard 5 (Antonyms/Synonyms) M

2. Which word means the opposite of block in paragraph 15?
   - A Allow
   - B Cover
   - C Hurt
   - D Stop

Standard 3 (Facts/Details) L

3. Which tree says it cannot help because it must take care of its leaves?
   - A Oak
   - B Birch
   - C Willow
   - D Spruce

Standard 3 (Clarifying) M

4. The little bird needs a warm place to stay because he—
   - A does not get along with the trees
   - B has not had enough food
   - C cannot fly up to his nest
   - D does not have a nest

Standard 9 (Characterization) M

5. In this story, the oak, birch, and willow trees are—
   - A selfish
   - B angry
   - C friendly
   - D careless

2.RC.D (Inferences) M

6. The Frost King told North Wind not to touch the spruce, pine, and juniper trees because they—
   - A have been kind to the little bird
   - B do not have acorns or leaves
   - C have too many nests in them
   - D never lose their leaves
Standard 9 (Characterization) L

7. Read the chart below. It shows something about different trees in the story.

Spruce  Keeps the bird warm
Pine    Blocks the wind for the bird
Juniper

Which one belongs in the empty box?

- A  Fixes the bird’s wing
- B  Sings to the bird
- C  Gives food to the bird
- D  Gives a nest to the bird

Standard 6 (Themes) H

8. What lesson can the reader learn from this story?

- A  Never give up.
- B  Look on the bright side.
- C  Kindness always pays.
- D  Don’t talk to strangers.
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