



STUDENT TESTING PROGRAM

**Linking the
Reading Content Standards,
Classroom Instruction,
and the DSTP**



July 2007

Linking the Reading Content Standards, Classroom Instruction, and the DSTP

I. OVERVIEW

PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to provide teachers with sample questions that are similar to those asked on the DSTP. It is important to note that all questions are aligned to the reading standards and can serve as models for enriching classroom discussion and instruction.

THE DELAWARE READING CONTENT STANDARDS

English Language Arts Content Standard Two:
Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through reading.

English Language Arts Content Standard Four:
Students will use literary knowledge accessed through print and visual media to connect self to society and culture.

THE STANCES – How a Reader Approaches Text

Determining Meaning: The reader demonstrates an overall understanding of the printed text. The focus is on how the reader begins to make meaning of the text. The answer to a question is obviously answered in the reading. Many times the answer is “right there” in the text.

Interpreting Meaning: The reader goes beyond the initial understanding and makes an interpretation of the text. The focus is on how the reader makes inferences and interpretation. The answer to the question requires searching for clues within the text and putting those clues together.

Extending Meaning: The reader stands apart from the text and critically considers it. The focus is on how the reader constructs meaning based on critical examination of the text and understanding of the author’s perspective or point of view

Connecting Meaning: The reader demonstrates a more complete understanding of the text based on the reader’s **personal experience**. The focus is on how the reader **personally** connects to the text. The answer to the question draws on the reader’s **own experiences**, thinking and opinions. [This stance is not assessed on the DSTP.]

**Examples of Questions Using the Four Stances
“Goldilocks and the Three Bears”**

DETERMINING MEANING

Question: How did Goldilocks probably get her name?

Answer: From the color of her hair which is yellow.

[Note: The information is “right there” in the text, but the reader needs to recognize the relevant content.]

INTERPRETING MEANING

Question: What one word would you choose to describe Goldilocks’ character? Why would you choose this word?

Answer: I would choose the word rude, because she comes into the bears’ house without their permission and uses and destroys their property.

[Note: The response is based on an interpretation of information in the text.]

EXTENDING MEANING

Question: What lesson does the story “Goldilocks and the Three Bears” teach? What information from the story can you use to support your answer?

Answer: The lesson “Goldilocks and the Three Bears” teaches is respect the property of others...

[Note: The response requires the reader to critically analyze/evaluate the information presented in the text.]

CONNECTING MEANING

Question: If you could be any character in this story, who would you be and why?

Answer: I would be Goldilocks because... (any character can be selected)

[Note: The focus is on how the reader connects to the characters in the text.]

II. DSTP CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

PASSAGE TYPES

- **Literary Text:** reading to explore others' experiences; reading for enjoyment
 - Narrative (Fiction)
 - adventure stories, historical fiction, contemporary realistic fiction, folktales, legends, myths, fables, tall tales, fantasy, science fiction, satire, parody, allegory, monologue, plays
 - Literary Nonfiction
 - personal essay, autobiographical and biographical sketches, character sketches, memoir, speech, and classical essay
 - Poetry
 - narrative, lyrical, humorous, free verse, ode, ballad, epic, sonnet, elegy

- **Informative Text:** reading to be informed
 - Exposition
 - informational trade book, text book, news article, feature article, encyclopedia entry, book review, historical document, essay (e.g., informational, persuasive, analytical, political, social, historical, scientific, natural history), research report, literary analysis
 - Argumentation and Persuasive Text
 - informational trade book, journal, speech, essay (persuasive, argumentative, political, social), letter to the editor, editorial, position paper (persuasive brochure, campaign literature, advertisements)
 - Procedural Text and Documents
 - directions, map, timeline, graph, table, chart, recipe, schedule, application, manual, product support material, contract

On the DSTP, word count and Lexile ranges will be used to guide the selection of reading comprehension passages. The following guidelines will be followed at each grade level.

GRADE	WORD COUNT (approximate)	LEXILE RANGE (approximate)
2	200 - 300	350 - 500
3	300 - 650	480 - 700
4	450 - 750	620 - 820
5	450 - 750	760 - 910
6	650 - 950	870 - 1000
7	650 - 950	940 - 1070
8	650 - 950	1010 - 1100
9	800 - 1100	1070 - 1120
10	800 - 1100	1120 - 1200

ITEM TYPES

- **Multiple Choice**

- Multiple choice items require students to show what they know and are able to do by selecting the best response from the four choices provided.
- Multiple choice items are scored as one point each.

- **Constructed Response**

- Constructed response items require students to demonstrate their understanding of the text by constructing responses to the questions posed.
- Short answer items are scored on a 0–1–2 scale, using an item specific rubric. Extended response items are scored on a 0–1–2–3–4 scale, using item-specific rubrics.

III. READING COMPREHENSION STANCES AND GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

A. Determining Meaning - The reader demonstrates an overall understanding of the printed text by:

1. using context clues to determine word meaning
2. identifying story elements/features (e.g. characters, setting, plot) and story structures (*literary text*)
3. identifying text features and text structure (*informative text*)
4. retelling a story or restating an informative text through writing
5. organizing the important points of the text via summaries, outlines, and/or graphic organizers

B. Interpreting Meaning - The reader goes beyond the initial understanding to develop an interpretation of the text by:

1. generating a purpose for reading
2. identifying and interpreting figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, symbolism) and literary devices, and differentiating between literal and non-literal meanings
3. identifying the author's purpose and the underlying purposes of media messages
4. comparing information between and within texts
5. discriminating between fact and opinion
6. making inferences about content, ideas, and author's choices (e.g., word choice, formatting devices) (*informative text*)
7. analyzing and evaluating information and messages presented through print by recognizing a variety of persuasive and propaganda techniques and how they are used in a variety of forms
8. making inferences about content, events, characters, setting, and author's decisions (*literary text*)
9. understanding the differences between genres

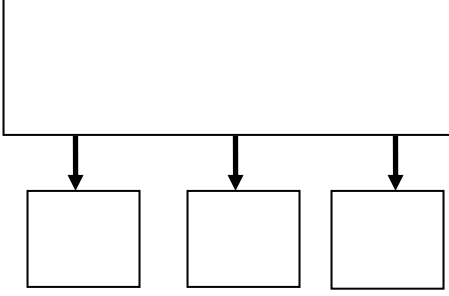
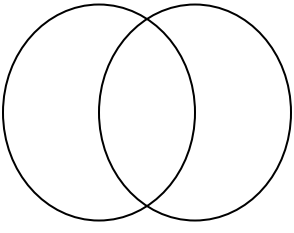
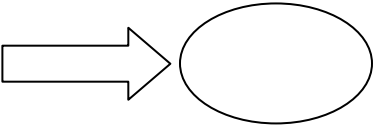
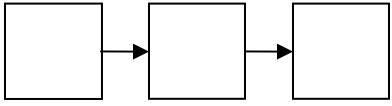
C. Extending Meaning - The reader stands apart from the text and critically analyzes and evaluates texts by:

1. accepting or rejecting the validity of the information and giving supporting evidence
2. relating the content of the text to real-life situations
3. connecting and synthesizing information from different sources
4. formulating and expressing opinions
5. using critical thinking and assimilating information with prior knowledge to draw conclusions, make inferences, and make predictions
6. recognizing and evaluating the impact of author's decisions (e.g., word choice, style, content, and literary elements – figurative language, dialogue, description, irony, and alliteration)
7. evaluating how print messages affect the reader and evaluating text for bias, misinformation, completeness, accuracy, and clarity
8. relating to the feelings of characters of varying ages, genders, nationalities, races, cultures, religions, and disabilities
9. identifying with characters based on a clear understanding of motivation
10. understanding the author's intent in choosing a particular genre
11. recognizing the effect of point of view
12. using literature as a resource for understanding social/political issues

IV. SAMPLE QUESTIONS REFLECTING THE STANCES AND GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

Sample questions are similar to those on the DSTP and are aligned to the standards and grade level expectations. Because this is a comprehensive document that addresses the grade level expectations for all grades, please refer to your *Delaware Recommended Curriculum Teacher Resource Guide* for your specific grade level expectations.

Stance: Determining Meaning The reader demonstrates an overall understanding of the printed text by:	
1. Using context clues to determine word meaning	In the last paragraph of the story, what does the word _____ mean?
	In the story, a [machine used to bale hay] is called a _____.
	In the first paragraph, what does the word _____ mean? Which words and/or phrases help you know the meaning of the word?
	Explain what _____ means. Use information from the article in your explanation.
2. Identifying story elements/features (e.g. characters, setting, plot) and story structures (literary text)	Who discovers that the manuscript is missing?
	What is [Gina's] problem in the story?
	Who is the <i>main</i> character in this story? How do you know?
	What is [Pat's] <i>major</i> conflict in this story? Use information from the story to support your answer.
3. Identifying text features and text structure (informative text)	What is the setting of the story?
	According to the chart, what year shows [the most growth for the farmers]?
	What information in the caption helps the reader understand the picture?
	How is the essay/article organized? [e.g., compare/contrast, cause/effect, problem/solution, sequence]

<p>3. Identifying text features and text structure - continued (<i>informative text</i>)</p>	<p>Which of these graphic organizers <i>best</i> shows how this article is organized?</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>a. Main idea/support</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>b. Compare/contrast</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>c. Cause/effect</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>d. Sequence of events</p> </div> </div>
<p>4. Retelling a story or restating an informative text through writing</p>	<p>According to the graph, which [crops grow best in Florida]?</p> <p>Which step in the directions tells how to [make the fleas jump]?</p> <p>According to the brochure, why is it a good idea to [visit the museum early in the morning]?</p> <p>Using information from the article, explain why [Dr. Dooley went to Southeast Asia].</p> <p>Compare and contrast the methods used in these two sets of directions. [Information is in the article – students do not need to make inferences]</p> <p>According to the article, why is [North Carolina] such a good place for [skydiving]?</p>

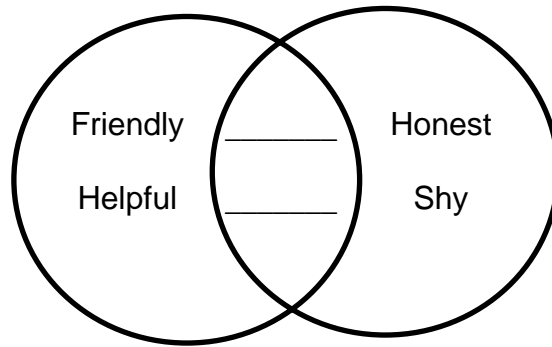
5. Organizing the important points of the text via summaries, outlines, and/or graphic organizers

Read the sentences in Boxes 1 and 2.

Tom answers the phone.		Tom runs to find his father.
Box 1	Box 2	Box 3

Which sentence goes in Box 2?

Look at this Venn diagram based on the story.



Martha **Both** **George**
Which words belong in the blanks?

Here is part of an outline about the article.

- Glass
- I. What is glass
 - A. It may be a solid
 - B. It may be a liquid
 - II. How glass is made
 - A. _____
 - B. The process
 - III. Kinds and uses of glass

What information belongs in the blank (II.A) in the outline?

What happens first in the story?

Using information from the article, complete the chart about elephants.

Elephants		
Habitat	Eating Habits	Size

Stance: Interpreting Meaning The reader goes beyond the initial understanding to develop an interpretation of the text by:	
1. Generating a purpose for reading	Why would someone read this article/essay/passage? After reading the first paragraph, what might you expect to learn from the rest of the article?
	2. Identifying and interpreting figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, symbolism) and literary devices, and differentiating between literal and non-literal meanings
3. Identifying the author's purpose and the underlying purposes of media messages.	What does the teacher mean when she says, ["Put on your thinking cap"]? What does the author mean when she describes the [mountain as "a mighty giant with hidden secrets"]? Use information from the story to support your answer. [Use this type of question to assess understanding of metaphors, similes, or other figurative language.]
	Explain why the author compares the [highway] to a [snake]. Use information from the article in your explanation. [Use this type of question to assess understanding of metaphors, similes, or other figurative language.]
4. Comparing information between and within texts	What is the <i>most likely</i> reason the author wrote this story/article/essay? Use information from the story to support your answer. Explain the purpose of the [flyer] about the [new bakery]. [The flyer informs readers about the new bakery but the underlying purpose is to persuade readers to go to the new bakery.]
	How does [Mary's] problem in the story compare to [Dan's] problem in the poem? How does the [problem] in the essay/article compare to [a different problem]? How do [Sam's] feelings toward [Grandpa] change throughout the story? How does the character/situation change throughout the story/essay/article? Using specific details from <i>both</i> poems, explain how the speakers are similar. Based on the comparison which [product] is better for [activity/person]? Explain how _____ and _____ are more different than alike. Explain how _____ and _____ are more alike than different.

<p>5. Discriminating between fact and opinion (<i>primarily in grades 3 and 4</i>)</p>	<p>Is “_____” a fact or an opinion? Explain how you know.</p>
<p>6. Making inferences about content, ideas, and author’s choices (e.g., word choice, formatting devices) (<i>informative text</i>)</p>	<p>Why does the author <i>most likely</i> include the [sidebar/chart/graph/picture]?</p>
	<p>Based on this article, why is the [movement of fire ants being tracked by scientists]?</p>
	<p>After reading these reports, what can the reader conclude about [some relevant social issue]?</p>
	<p>Which special program would <i>most likely</i> include information about [penguins]?</p>
	<p>How does the reader know that the brochure is designed for [teenagers]? What examples can you give to support your thinking?</p>
	<p>How does the author use facts and/or opinions to support his/her thesis/main idea/message?</p>
	<p>Explain which ideas in the graph/picture/chart are reinforced in the article.</p>
<p>7. Analyzing and evaluating information and messages presented through print by recognizing a variety of persuasive and propaganda techniques and how they are used in a variety of forms (<i>primarily grades 6 and above</i>)</p>	<p>Which line from the advertisement is the <i>best</i> example of a persuasive technique?</p>
	<p>Which statement from the article could be considered propaganda?</p>
	<p>Explain the ways the author of this article attempts to persuade the reader to agree with her viewpoint. Use information from the article to support your response.</p>

8. Making inferences about content, events, characters, setting, and author's decisions <i>(literary text)</i>	What is the theme of this story?
	Which word <i>best</i> describes the children in the story?
	What is the turning point of the story?
	Explain how [Dave] teaches a "life lesson" to [Masters]. Use information from the story in your explanation.
	Describe the relationship between _____ and _____.
	Explain why the author chose [modern-day China] as the setting for this story. Use information from the story in your explanation.
	Why does the [king] tell all the people to [empty their pockets]?
	Explain the most likely reason the author includes the phrase/expression "_____."
	Explain how you know the story takes place in the [1860s].
9. Understanding the differences between genres	Is this passage fiction or nonfiction? How do you know?
	Explain how a reader can tell this selection is a persuasive essay. Use examples from the passage to support your explanation.
	Why is this passage classified as _____? [e.g., literary nonfiction, folktale, historical fiction]
	Is this passage true? How do you know?

<p>Stance: Extending Meaning The reader stands apart from the text and critically analyzes and evaluates texts by:</p>	
<p>1. Accepting or rejecting the validity of the information and giving supporting evidence</p>	Should readers believe the author's claim about _____? Why or why not?
	The author supports his ideas about _____ by using _____. [e.g., facts, figures, opinions, quotations, testimony from experts, references to other publications, etc.]
	Explain why readers should accept or reject [Mr. Smith's] claim that ["Watermelon is high in vitamins."] Use information from the article to support your answer.
	What helps the reader know/conclude/decide that the information is reliable/trustworthy? Use examples/information from the article to support your answer.
<p>2. Relating the content of the text to real-life situations</p>	Explain why [some person from the essay/article or the author] would be a good speaker for your school. Use information from the article in your answer.
	Who would <i>most likely</i> use [this information]? Use information from the article to support your answer.
	Why would this article be helpful to a student writing a report on _____?
	Explain which information in this article about the [air currents] would be <i>most</i> important to a person [trying to fly a kite].
<p>3. Connecting and synthesizing information from different sources</p>	Using information from <i>both</i> passages, explain what challenges [astronauts] face when [adapting to life in the space station].
	Using information from both poems, explain what readers can learn about [growing older].
	Explain why [New Year's Day] is an important time in different cultures. Use information from both the poem and the story in your answer.

4. Formulating and expressing opinions	Based on the information in the article/essay/story, explain the most likely action _____ would take in [a different situation].
	Which type of [surfboard] mentioned in the article would you purchase? Use information from the article to support your choice.
	Did _____ make the best choice? Why or why not? Use information from the article to support your opinion.
	Which poet/character expresses a stronger belief [that prejudice can be overcome]? Use information from the poems to support your opinion.
	Is “_____” an effective title for this passage? Use information from the passage to support your opinion.
5. Using critical thinking and assimilating information with prior knowledge to draw conclusions, make inferences, and make predictions	How would you describe the author’s attitude toward the [ambassador]?
	If you did not have [elastic straps to fasten the pack to the car roof], what else could you use?
	Are _____ and _____ more alike than different? Use information from the article/essay/story to support your answer.
	Based on this article, what will the [scientists] <i>most likely</i> study next?
	If this article were to continue, what would most likely come next? Use information from the article to support your answer.
	Explain why [Jackson’s] actions might be considered [patriotic]. Use information from the article in your explanation. [The passage contains information about Jackson’s actions but does not relate them to patriotism; therefore, the students must use their prior knowledge about patriotism along with the information about Jackson in the text.]
	Explain why “_____” is an effective/clever title. [Note: This is NOT the same question as explain why it is an appropriate title. Effectiveness gets at “craft” not “appropriateness.”]
	What does the author do to make this article interesting and easy to understand? Use examples from the article to support your answer.
	Explain the <i>most</i> important lesson readers should learn from this story. Use examples from the story in your answer.

6. Recognizing and evaluating the impact of author's decisions (e.g., word choice, style, content and literary elements – figurative language, dialogue, description, irony, and alliteration)	The author ends the story with two questions/a prediction/ a quote. What impact does this have on the reader?
	How does the author's use of dialogue impact the reader?
	Explain the effectiveness of beginning/ending the essay/article/story with _____. [e.g., description, narrative, question]
	Why does the poet call the child "the boy" instead of giving him a name?
	Why does the author refer to _____ as _____? How does that influence/affect the reader or the author's message?
	What is the intended impact on readers of including [some piece of information or some technique]?
	How does the author's description of [murky shadows] affect the reader?
7. Evaluating how print messages affect the reader and evaluating text for bias, misinformation, completeness, accuracy, and clarity	After reading the article, which idea would you need more information about if you wanted to _____?
	What part of the story/article/essay seems to contradict one another?
	Which phrases from the article reveal the author's bias regarding the subject?
	Does the author give a clear and thorough explanation of [the process for nominating candidates for elected office]? Use information from the article to support your evaluation.
	Why does the advertisement name famous people who wear Brand X?
	What information is not mentioned in this article? How does this omission affect the author's message?
	What information (or whose point of view) is missing from this article/essay? How does that affect the message?
	Why does the article cite [some source or some person]?
8. Relating to the feelings of characters of varying ages, genders, nationalities, races, cultures, religions, and disabilities	Explain how [Monica's feelings] would <i>most likely</i> have been different if [she had been born in the United States]. Use examples from the story in your explanation.
	Would a [young child] feel the same way as [an older person] did in this story? Use examples from the story to support your answer.

9. Identifying with characters based on a clear understanding of motivation	<p>Based on this story, why would [Mari] decide not to [run for class president]? [School elections are not mentioned in this story, but the answer is based on Mari's actions and motives in situations presented in this story.]</p>
	<p>Based on this story, what would [Abner] most likely do when he is an adult? [Abner has an aquarium, takes diving lessons, and is on the swim team; therefore, he is likely to have a career related to the ocean or water as an adult. No careers relating to the ocean or water are mentioned in the story.]</p>
	<p>Based on this story, why would [Steven] decide not to [go to a party at his school]? Use information from the story in your answer. [There is no mention of school parties. The answer is based on Steven's actions and motives in the situations presented in the story.]</p>
10. Understanding the author's intent in choosing a particular genre	<p>Why does the author most likely choose to tell this story in the form of a play?</p>
	<p>Explain the <i>most likely</i> reasons the author chose to express her ideas in a poem/story/play/essay. Use information from the poem/story/play/essay in your explanation.</p>
11. Recognizing the effect of point of view	<p>Was telling the story from [the mother's] point of view effective? Use examples from the story to support your answer.</p>
	<p>Why does the author choose to tell his story in the third person instead of the first person point of view?</p>
	<p>Explain how the story would have been different if it had been told by [Elsa] instead of [the mother]. Use examples from the story in your answer.</p>
	<p>Why is telling the story from [the grandmother's] point of view a good idea?</p>
12. Using literature as a resource for understanding social/political issues <i>(primarily grades 9 and above)</i>	<p>How does this story/article/essay help the reader understand more about the issue of _____?</p>
	<p>Using examples from the story, explain the social and political issues addressed by this article/essay/story.</p>