



Pearson is committed to delivering the finest resources to ensure that classrooms are progressing toward the expectations of College and Career Readiness. This commitment includes preparing students for the unique tasks they will encounter on upcoming assessments. With this goal in mind, *Reading Street Common Core* has introduced Weekly Balanced Tests and Unit and End-of-Year Balanced Benchmark Tests.

The following contains information about the format of the Balanced Tests including the best way to incorporate these tests into the classroom and strategies for meeting the needs of individual students.

What is the goal of the Balanced Tests?

The goal of the Balanced Tests is to provide practice in the unique test item formats that students will experience on consortia-led assessments—responding to authentic text through evidence-based selected response questions and written response essays.

The Balanced Tests were designed to reflect the rigor and format that students will see on the consortia-led assessments. Rather than assessing discrete skills, the College and Career Readiness Tests assess students' cumulative skills as they develop as readers. *This test allows them to demonstrate their capabilities as readers rather than their ability to prepare or study for a test.* These tests take a higher-level integrated approach and are designed to assess students' competency as they move toward meeting the Next Generation Standards for ELA.

What is the rationale for the format of the Balanced Tests?

Upon review of the Balanced Tests, you will note that they refer students back to the main and paired selections. One of the aspects of primary importance in the test development was to provide authentic text at appropriate complexity levels for students to respond to — which is in line with what they will experience on the consortia-led assessments. An additional benefit of this is that the passages are a familiar and comfortable base for students to experience test items that are brand new to them. Lastly, responding to texts that students have been working with throughout the week functions as the final step in their development of close reading skills. Extracting further evidence from these texts is valuable experience and practice for the consortia-led assessments.

One of the new test items that students will encounter is the Part A/Part B multipart question. The Balanced Tests provide regular practice in this format while also asking students to demonstrate that they can justify the choice they made in Part A by providing evidence in Part B.

What other tests could/should I be incorporating in my classroom?

It is important to remember that the Balanced Tests are just *one option* in your *Reading Street Common Core* assessment suite. Use the Balanced Tests *as a complement to—rather than a replacement for—*the other tests in your assessment suite in an effort to get a comprehensive measurement of student progress and knowledge. The entire assessment suite (of which the Balanced tests are one component) will provide teachers with a holistic picture of student progress throughout the course of the school year. Please note that the entire assessment suite is available in print and online at *Pearson Realize*. Below is a listing of the assessments available for each grade band as well as suggestions for how you might incorporate the Balanced Tests in your classroom.

Grades K–1

Fresh Reads for Fluency and Comprehension (Grade 1 only)

- Multiple-choice and constructed-response tests that can be administered throughout the year, each week after children have been taught the comprehension skill lesson
- Provide children practice with the target and review comprehension skills of the week with cold reads that are matched to their instructional reading levels
- Provide the opportunity to check oral reading fluency

Weekly Tests (Grade 1 only)

- Multiple-choice tests that can be administered at the end of every week
- Explicitly focus on what was learned that week. Measure children’s understanding of each week’s high-frequency words, word reading/phonics skills and comprehension skills
- Help identify children who have mastered each week’s words and skills and children who may need intervention

Unit and End-of-Year Benchmark Tests

- Multiple-choice and constructed-response tests administered throughout the year at the end of each six-week unit to measure children’s ability to apply target comprehension skills and other literacy skills taught during each unit.
- Provide feedback about the effectiveness of your instruction, and help you plan and make instructional decisions for each child
- Unit Benchmark Tests can be used to help you make regrouping decisions.
- End-of-Year Tests are cumulative assessments administered at the end of each grade. Assesses comprehension skills, high-frequency words, phonics skills, written conventions (grammar, usage, and mechanic skills), and writing through multiple-choice and constructed response questions.

Writing to Sources

- Support student writing development with extended writing products focused on writing in response to multiple texts and practice with citing text-based evidence
- Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate comprehension by responding to multiple

sources within a unit of instruction preparing them for unit research projects and performance-based tasks, via the Unit Level Prove It!

- Offer multiple opportunities to practice writing in the tested genres of argument/opinion, informative/explanatory, and narrative

Assessment Handbook

- Addresses the supportive tools for subjective and prolonged measures of student performance including reading and writing behaviors, fluency checks, reading and writing logs, and student portfolios
- Offers teachers ideas and instructions for conducting various types of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments
- Provides records to monitor progress of student performance over time

Weekly Balanced Tests and Unit and End-of-Year Balanced Benchmark Tests

- Provide test prep or modeling opportunities involving text-based comprehension, vocabulary, and writing in multiple-choice format as well as constructed and extended response
- Provide a higher level of rigor
- Support ongoing practice for summative tests that include evidence-based selected response items
- Give students practice opportunities for performance-based tasks that include literary analysis

SUGGESTIONS FOR USAGE :

K-1 students are still a year or two away from experiencing the consortia-led testing. In light of this, we suggest that the Balanced tests be used largely as modeling opportunities so that students may begin to become familiar with the format and rigor. Please know that you should take as long as you need to support students through this process, both by helping them understand the structure of the test as well as helping them work through the complexity of the questions.

If you decide to administer the Balanced tests for a grade, you may utilize the following scoring considerations:

- You do not have to administer the Constructed Response and Extended Response Writing each time, particularly if time is a concern. You may want to alternate between the two response types so that students have an opportunity to experience both types of test items.
- Part B questions are optional When including Part B questions, you might consider partial scoring. For example:
 - Scenario 1: Student gets A and B correct – they get full credit – 2 points
 - Scenario 2: Student gets A correct and B incorrect – they get partial credit – 1 point
 - Scenario 3: Student gets A incorrect and B correct – they get no credit – 0 points (Students need to get A correct before they can be given credit for the rationale B)
 - Scenario 4: Student gets A incorrect and B incorrect – they get no credit – 0 points

Grades 2 - 3

Fresh Reads for Fluency and Comprehension

- Multiple-choice and constructed-response tests that can be administered throughout the year, each week after children have been taught the comprehension skill lesson
- Provide students practice with the target and review comprehension skills of the week with cold reads that are matched to their instructional reading levels
- Provide the opportunity to check oral reading fluency

Weekly Tests

- Multiple-choice tests that can be administered at the end of every week
- Explicitly focus on what was learned that week. Measure children's understanding of each week's vocabulary words, phonics/word analysis skills and comprehension skills
- Help identify children who have mastered each week's words and skills and children who may need intervention

Unit and End-of-Year Benchmark Tests

- Multiple-choice and constructed-response tests administered throughout the year at the end of each six-week unit to measure children's ability to apply target comprehension skills and other literacy skills taught during each unit.
- Provide feedback about the effectiveness of your instruction, and help you plan and make instructional decisions for each child
- Unit Benchmark Tests can be used to help you make regrouping decisions.
- End-of-Year Tests are cumulative assessments administered at the end of each grade. Assesses comprehension skills, high-frequency words, phonics skills, written conventions (grammar, usage, and mechanic skills), and writing through multiple-choice and constructed response questions

Writing to Sources

- Support student writing development with extended writing products focused on writing in response to multiple texts and practice with citing text-based evidence
- Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate comprehension by responding to multiple sources within a unit of instruction preparing them for unit research projects and performance-based tasks , via the Unit Level Prove It!
- Offer multiple opportunities to practice writing in the tested genres of argument/opinion, informative/explanatory, and narrative

Assessment Handbook

- Addresses the supportive tools for subjective and prolonged measures of student performance including reading and writing behaviors, fluency checks, reading and writing logs, and student portfolios
- Offers teachers ideas and instructions for conducting various types of diagnostic, formative, and

summative assessments

- Provides records to monitor progress of student performance over time

Balanced Weekly Tests and Unit and End-of-Year Balanced Benchmark Tests

- Provide test prep or modeling opportunities involving text-based comprehension, vocabulary, and writing in multiple-choice format as well as constructed and extended response
- Provide a higher level of rigor
- Support ongoing practice for summative tests that include evidence-based selected response items
- Give students practice opportunities for performance-based tasks that include literary analysis

SUGGESTIONS FOR USAGE :

Students in Grades 2 - 3 are starting to become more familiar with the type of critical thinking needed for the consortia-led test. However, it is still important to be mindful that for many students, this is their first exposure to these types of test items. For this reason, we suggest continuing to use the Balanced tests as a modeling resource while also peppering them into your assessment schedule.

Possible schedules might include:

- Administer existing Reading Street tests throughout the beginning of the year to focus on students' capacity for those core skills, but then gradually transition to the Balanced Tests later in the year, as students begin to prepare for the upcoming consortia-led test.
- Administer existing Reading Street Weekly Tests to get a pulse on students' skill level, and then administer the Balanced Unit and End-of-Year Benchmark Tests for your summative unit test. This would allow for students to become practiced in a wide variety of test items.

If the Balanced tests are administered for a grade, you may consider the following:

- You do not have to administer the Constructed and Extended Writing each time, particularly if time is a concern. You may want to alternate between these two response types so that students have an opportunity to experience both types of test items.
- Part B questions are optional
- When including Part B questions, you might consider partial scoring. For example:
 - Scenario 1: Student gets A and B correct – they get full credit – 2 points
 - Scenario 2: Student gets A correct and B incorrect – they get partial credit – 1 point
 - Scenario 3: Student gets A incorrect and B correct – they get no credit – 0 points (Students need to get A correct before they can be given credit for the rationale B)
 - Scenario 4: Student gets A incorrect and B incorrect – they get no credit – 0 points

Grades 4-6

Fresh Reads for Fluency and Comprehension

- Multiple-choice and constructed-response tests that can be administered throughout the year, each week after children have been taught the comprehension skill lesson

- Provide students practice with the target and review comprehension skills of the week with cold reads that are matched to their instructional reading levels
- Provide the opportunity to check oral reading fluency

Weekly Tests

- Multiple-choice tests that can be administered at the end of every week
- Explicitly focus on what was learned that week. Measure children's understanding of each week's vocabulary words and comprehension skills. An optional subtest for word analysis is also included.
- Help identify children who have mastered each week's words and skills and children who may need intervention

Unit and End-of-Year Benchmark Tests

- Multiple-choice and constructed-response tests administered throughout the year at the end of each six-week unit term measure children's ability to apply target comprehension skills and other literacy skills taught during each unit.
- Provide feedback about the effectiveness of your instruction, and help you plan and make instructional decisions for each child
- Unit Benchmark Tests can be used to help you make regrouping decisions.
- End-of-Year Tests are cumulative assessments administered at the end of each grade. Assesses comprehension skills, vocabulary strategies, phonics skills, written conventions (grammar, usage, and mechanic skills), and writing through multiple-choice and constructed response questions

Writing to Sources

- Support student writing development with extended writing products focused on writing in response to multiple texts and practice with citing text-based evidence
- Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate comprehension by responding to multiple sources within a unit of instruction preparing them for unit research projects and performance-based tasks, via the Unit Level Prove It!
- Offer multiple opportunities to practice writing in the tested genres of argument/opinion, informative/explanatory, and narrative

Assessment Handbook

- Addresses the supportive tools for subjective and prolonged measures of student performance including reading and writing behaviors, fluency checks, reading and writing logs, and student portfolios
- Offers teachers ideas and instructions for conducting various types of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments
- Provides records to monitor progress of student performance over time

Balanced Weekly Tests and Unit and End-of-Year Balanced Benchmark Tests

- Provide test prep or modeling opportunities involving text-based comprehension, vocabulary, and writing in multiple-choice format as well as constructed and extended response
- Provide a higher level of rigor
- Support ongoing practice for summative tests that include evidence-based selected response items
- Give students practice opportunities for performance-based tasks that include literary analysis

SUGGESTIONS FOR USAGE:

Students in Grades 4-6 should start to see the more complex test items (like those on the consortia-led test) on a more regular basis. However, we are mindful of the fact that these test items are still new to many students. We encourage you to make appropriate modifications (similar to what was listed for other grade spans) around modeling, partial scoring, and alternating between writing response types.

If the Balanced tests are administered for a grade, you may consider the following:

- You do not have to administer the Constructed and Extended Writing each time, particularly if time is a concern. You may want to alternate between these two response types so that students have an opportunity to experience both types of test items.
- Part B questions are optional
- When including Part B questions, you might consider partial scoring. For example:
 - Scenario 1: Student gets A and B correct – they get full credit – 2 points
 - Scenario 2: Student gets A correct and B incorrect – they get partial credit – 1 point
 - Scenario 3: Student gets A incorrect and B correct – they get no credit – 0 points (Students need to get A correct before they can be given credit for the rationale B)
 - Scenario 4: Student gets A incorrect and B incorrect – they get no credit – 0 points