

## **New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) READING**

- Items are aligned to the previous grade standards.
- Passages are preceded by a purpose setting statement (PSS) which looks exactly like the traditional MEA PSS.
- Passages are formatted the same as MEA; poems numbered every fifth line; prose numbered in the margin when a question refers to a specific part of the text.
- Multiple choice items are arranged in text order.
- Short passages are followed by four multiple choice (MC) items and one constructed response (CR). Long passages still have eight MC items.
- A long passage has two CR items. These are not presented together but are separated by multiple choice items.
- Students are provided a space to respond to CR items and are not allowed to use any additional space.
- Students are assessed on literary passages and informational text passages. While a passage may be persuasive in nature, it is not specifically addressed as such but considered to be an informational text.
- NECAP standards are divided by “initial” and “analytical” understandings. Items for a passage will include both levels.
- Students are asked questions about text features including terms like text box, headings/subheading, bold or italics, etc. In grades 3 & 4, some examples of text features are table of contents, glossary, charts, graphs, diagrams, and illustrations.
- CR questions are about reading comprehension and are not scored for quality of writing (same as MEA). Responses in bullet, note, or chart format are accepted without compromising the score.
- Poetry may be included, often in pairs. Poetry may not be present for every reading test.
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### **Word Identification Skills and Strategies (Grades 3 & 4 Only)**

The reading test includes “stand-alone” word knowledge items. These items measure student knowledge of sounds, syllable types, and or word patterns. Typically students are asked the common spellings for consonants and vowels in grade 3 and variant spelling for consonants or vowels in grade 4. Other item types include matching words to words with similar sounds such as words that rhyme or words with the same vowel sound or identifying correct spellings of common suffixes or prefixes in a word.

### **Vocabulary**

The reading test includes “stand-alone” vocabulary items. These may include a sentence which demonstrates use. Vocabulary words are also presented as part of the item set for each passage. In-passage vocabulary items are often words which have multiple meaning so selecting the correct meaning may require contextual understanding. They may also be common words used in an unusual way. Students may have to recognize the relationship among a set of words and select a word with the same relationship or select or identify:

the correct definition (either from a list of choices grades 3-8 or from a dictionary entry in grades 4-8),  
a synonym,  
an antonym,  
the meaning of a word root, prefix or suffix

### **Literary Text**

Literary passages include both fiction and narrative nonfiction. The NECAP Grade Level Expectations indicate initial understanding of devices like character development, plot development, setting, etc. Analysis includes predicting, understanding cause and effect, main ideas, author's message or general theme of the passage.

### **Informational Text**

Items include comprehending information found in text features, summarizing information, drawing conclusions based on the information in a text, recognizing generalizations about text, understanding the central idea of part of text or across whole text, connecting information from different parts of text or synthesizing the information from different parts of text. Persuasive text may be presented as informational text and treated the same. .

### **Other Considerations**

Fluency, though not reported separately, is an important consideration when preparing for the NECAP reading test. The NECAP glossary indicates that fluency is associated with rate, accuracy, and scores on comprehension tests. When students are able to recognize and decode words with ease, more mental energy can be spent on accessing the deeper meaning of the text.

**It is important to develop fluency in any situation.**