



English Language Arts: Lessons Learned . . .

First, the MDE Office of Standards and Assessment (OSA) would like to offer a heartfelt THANK YOU to the students, teachers, technology coordinators, principals... everyone... who have assisted with the first several days of the M-STEP testing window. Several email messages have come in offering feedback on the grades 5, 8, and 11 ELA M-STEP. Some of this feedback is presented here in the form of "Lessons Learned." Please share these lessons with your colleagues who have classes and grade levels yet to take the spring 2015 M-STEP.

Lesson 1:

"The ELA test takes longer than expected."

Schools have reported that for some students the ELA M-STEP is taking more time than predicted. During the first week of the M-STEP, OSA reviewed this feedback carefully and altered the test administration guidelines. Please review these guidelines carefully when preparing a testing schedule for your school. You know your students best...plan the testing sessions around their needs (within the guidelines).

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/M-STEP_Resumed_Testing_Policy_Update_487109_7.pdf

It is important to remember that the ELA M-STEP is a comprehensive ELA assessment. For this reason, it has much more content than the MEAP, which for most grades was only reading.

Lesson 2:

"My students said they could not select the correct answer."

The new item types (for the online students) may be unfamiliar and confusing. One item type in particular has generated a few phone calls: the select-text paragraph. This item type presents the students with a paragraph in which the answers are selectable words, phrases, or sentences. Students should not expect every word, phrase, or sentence to be selectable. If a student is unable to "click" on a sentence, then that sentence is not one of the answer choices.

Sample items sets are available at every grade level. Each item type that is included in the ELA M-STEP is also included in the sample sets. Sample item sets can be found in **Insight**. Alternately, they can be found at <https://wbte.drcedirect.com/MI/portals/mi/ott1>. It must be accessed using Google Chrome; login information is noted on the screen.

Lesson 3:

“There is less response space than expected for the constructed response items.”

It is important to note that the ELA assessment has only one full-write essay; it is the Performance Task, Part 2. All other constructed response items are intended to require brief responses; these items are scored on a 2-point rubric. Although the response area is shorter than some students expected, it is adequate for each of the constructed response items.

Lesson 4:

“My Performance Task is missing the questions.”

Each ELA Performance Task has two parts; part 1 contains “research questions” and part 2 contains the full-write essay prompt. Each is presented in a split screen format: source material and directions on the left and questions/writing prompt on the right. The left side of the screen is static, meaning it does not change from part 1 to part 2. For this reason, on the 2015 online M-STEP, students will see the research questions referenced again in the instructions for part 2. Students should disregard the reference to Part 1 research questions when answering the prompt in Part 2. Sample Performance Tasks can be found at http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-22709_70117-350553--,00.html.