



English Language Arts Summary

*Over the past year, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has provided a great deal of information to the field on its new assessment system called the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress—or M-STEP. The information related specifically to **M-STEP English Language Arts (ELA)** has appeared in different places and at different times. Therefore, the purpose of this document is to collect all of the information related to the ELA test in one place. That way it will be easier for teachers, administrators, test coordinators, and others to know exactly how the test is designed and when it should be administered.*

Background

In June 2014, the Michigan Legislature required the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to develop new, one-year-only summative tests for spring 2015. These tests were designed to replace the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) tests and the Michigan-developed components of the Michigan Merit Examination (MME). However, the notification in June 2014 meant that the MDE had to condense a normal three-year test development process into just nine months. The department has worked hard to accomplish this task and is excited about delivering its new M-STEP assessments this spring.

Assessment Grades and Content

The M-STEP ELA tests

- are administered to students in grades 3-8 and 11;
- are aligned to the current Michigan ELA Standards (reading, writing, language, and listening);
- include content developed by both the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and Michigan educators;
- measure current-year student knowledge (as opposed to prior-year knowledge);
- assess writing at every grade (instead of just 4, 7, and 11); and
- will be administered online (paper/pencil versions of the test will be provided to schools/districts that request and are approved for that option).

Assessment Components

The ELA tests have three components: (1) an Online Test (or paper/pencil version), (2) a Classroom Activity, and (3) a Performance Task. Students in grades 3-8 **must** be administered all three test components. However, due to concerns about testing time, the Classroom Activities

and their accompanying Performance Tasks are **optional** for students in grade 11. (While there are some benefits to administering these two components to grade 11 students, they are not required.) There will be no accountability penalty in terms of participation or scoring for high schools that choose not to administer them.

Classroom Activities and Performance Tasks

Classroom Activities (CA) and Performance Tasks (PT) are new to statewide testing this spring. A brief description of each follows.

1. **Classroom Activity:** The CA is a 30-minute scripted lesson presented to students one to three days prior to the administration of the PT. (The CA **may** be administered on the same day as the PT, if desired.) The purpose of the CA is to give students a working familiarity with the context of a coordinating PT. The CA is conducted in the classroom by a teacher and, therefore, does **not** require scheduling of computer labs.
2. **Performance Task:** The PT is a multi-item task administered online (or via a test booklet in schools/districts approved to use paper/pencil versions of the test). It is designed to assess student understanding of ELA content and is aligned to Michigan's content standards. For ELA PTs, students will be asked to (1) review 2-5 pieces of source material (reading passages), (2) respond to 1-2 selected-response items and 2-3 short constructed-response items, and (3) complete one full-write essay (sometimes referred to as a long constructed- or extended-response item.) Administering the PT without first conducting the CA is considered a testing irregularity.

The CAs and PTs are meant to work together as a coordinated set. For example, the Grade 5 ELA CA sample titled "Working Together" discusses how people work together, and how people and animals work together. It introduces students to the vocabulary and general concepts that are covered in the coordinating PT titled "Service Animals." The CA is intended to generate student interest in further exploration of key ideas, something they will do in the PT.

ELA PTs are designed around various modes of writing and aligned to specific grade levels: informational and opinion in grades 3-5, narrative in grades 3-8, and explanatory and argumentative in grades 6-8 and 11. (See the table that follows for more information.) As part of the PT, each student will be asked to write one full-length essay using a particular writing mode. For example, a third grade student could receive a narrative, informational, or opinion PT. Schools and teachers will not know which mode the students will be asked to respond to until the testing session begins.

ELA Performance Tasks and Rubrics	
Grade	Writing Modes
3-5	Informational: Students will write to inform an audience, making reference to the source material.
3-5	Opinion: Students will form and defend an opinion, supported by information from the source material.
3-8	Narrative: Source material will serve as inspiration for the constructed response, text-inspired rather than text-based.
6-8 and 11	Explanatory: Students will write to explain a subject, analyzing source material in their explanation.
6-8 and 11	Argumentative: Students will compose an argument, using evidence from the source material to form and support claims. In grades 7-11, students will also use the source material to form counterclaims.

To familiarize teachers and administrators with CAs and PTs, the MDE's Office of Standards and Assessment (OSA) has posted samples on the M-STEP website (www.michigan.gov/mstep). There is one sample CA and PT for each grade level. (Please note that the mode of the posted sample does not imply that it is the only mode for that grade level.) The PTs can be matched to the scoring rubrics, which are also posted on the M-STEP website.

Online Administration: Component Order, Timing, and Test Window

If the ELA tests are administered online, the MDE recommends the following component order and timing.

1. Online Test (OT)

- The OT may be administered in 1 session with a scheduled break (not to exceed 20 minutes) or in 2 separate sessions of equal length (45 minutes each for grades 3-8 or 60 minutes each for grade 11) **on the same day**.
- Breaks may be provided during test sessions using the software's pause feature.
- Although the OT is **not** timed, schools should allow about 1.5 hours of testing time for students in grades 3-8 and 2 hours for students in grade 11.

2. Classroom Activity (CA)

- The CA must be administered in one session 1-3 days prior to administering the performance task. The CA may be administered on the same day as the PT, if desired.
- The CA will take about 30 minutes for students in all grades to complete.
- If the CA is administered after the PT, it is considered a testing irregularity.

3. Performance Task (PT)

- The PT has 2 parts that may be administered in 1 session with scheduled breaks between parts, or in 2 sessions corresponding to Parts 1 and 2. The parts may be administered on separate days.
- Students may take breaks within a part; however, once a student moves on to part 2 of the PT, he or she will not be able to review or revise items in part 1.
- Each part of the PT will take about 1 hour for students in all grades to complete, so schools should allow a total of 2 hours for the entire task.

Although this is the testing order recommended by the MDE for online test administration, schools may choose to administer the OT **after** the PT (again, as long as the CA precedes the PT).

For online testing, not all students have to be administered the same assessment at the same time, nor on the same day. Schools have the flexibility to test ELA any time within the 3-week test windows designated for students in grades 3-8 or within the 8-week test window designated for students in grade 11 (see the table below).

Spring 2015 Online Testing Schedule for M-STEP ELA Assessments								
Week Beginning								
Grades	4/13	4/20	4/27	5/4	5/11	5/18	5/25	6/1
5 and 8								
4 and 7								
3 and 6								
11								

Paper/Pencil Administration: Component Order, Timing, and Test Window

If a school/district is approved by the OSA to take a paper/pencil version of the ELA test, it will receive paper/pencil test booklets that follow the same blueprint as the OT (meaning the same content areas and skills are assessed). The test booklet will also include the paper/pencil PT (in other words, no component of the overall test will be administered on a computer).

There is a set order that **must** be followed when administering the paper/pencil version of the ELA test.

1. Day 1 Paper/Pencil Test

- Schools must administer the Day 1 ELA paper/pencil test first (that is, the part of the overall test that replaces the OT). The Day 1 test is a fixed form with 2 parts

and contains a variety of item types, including multiple choice and short constructed response.

- Although the test is **not** timed, schools should allow about 1.5 hours of testing time for students in grades 3-8 and 2 hours for students in grade 11.

2. Day 2 Paper/Pencil CA and PT

- Schools must administer the Day 2 ELA paper/pencil PT on the day immediately following administration of the paper/pencil test.
- The CA will take about 30 minutes for students in all grades to complete. It must be administered before the PT, either on the Monday before testing, on Day 1 (before or after testing), or on Day 2 (before the PT is administered).
- The PT will take about 2 hours for students in all grades to complete.

With paper/pencil testing, the ELA tests **must** be administered on specific days within the window designated for each grade level. Following are the dates for spring 2015.

- **Grades 11**
 - Day 1 Test: April 14
 - Day 2 PT: April 15
 - Makeup: April 17, April 20, and April 24-May 1
- **Grades 5 and 8**
 - Day 1 Test: April 14
 - Day 2 PT: April 15
 - Makeup: April 16-17, April 20, and April 24-May 1
- **Grades 4 and 7**
 - Day 1 Test: April 28
 - Day 2 PT: April 29
 - Makeup: April 30, May 1 and 4, May 8-15
- **Grades 3 and 6**
 - Day 1 Test: May 19
 - Day 2 PT: May 20
 - Makeup: May 21-22, May 26, and May 29-June 5

M-STEP Spring 2015 Preview

To help teachers and students prepare for spring 2015 testing, the OSA has developed the M-STEP Spring 2015 Preview. The preview allows students and teachers to (1) see what some of the Technology Enhanced (TE) items will look like on the OT, and (2) practice using the navigation tools and features of the online delivery engine.

The M-STEP Spring 2015 Preview **must** be used in Google Chrome. To access it, (1) go to <https://wbte.drcedirect.com/MI/portals/mi/ott1>, (2) click “Online Tools Training,” (3) click “Spring 2015 Preview,” (4) click “Click here to Sign-In,” (5) enter the given username and password, and (6) click “Sign In.”

Sample Items

The OSA is also posting sample items to provide students and teachers with examples of test questions that demonstrate the rigor of the academic content standards being measured. Like the M-STEP Spring 2015 Preview, the Sample Items will be embedded in Michigan’s online delivery engine so that students and teachers can become familiar with its navigation tools and features.

The samples will be organized into sets that ultimately will contain about 30 items specific to each tested grade (3-8 and 11) and content area. The difference between the M-STEP Spring 2015 Preview and the Sample Item Sets is that the preview (1) contains **both** ELA and mathematics items, and (2) the items are only at the third- and fourth-grade levels. The Sample Item Sets will be both grade- and content-specific.

The Sample Item Sets will be released on a rolling schedule that mirrors the staggered testing windows. The first sets for grades 3-8 and 11 ELA were posted the week of February 16th at <https://wbte.drcedirect.com/MI/portals/mi/>. This first release phase consists of about one-third of the total number of sample items that the OSA will post. (These sets must be accessed using Google Chrome.)

Teachers may also choose to look at the Smarter Balanced Practice and Training Tests posted online at www.smarterbalanced.org. However, while the items on those tests are similar in **content** to M-STEP items, the online delivery engine is different.

ELA Testing and the Michigan Merit Examination

The Grade 11 M-STEP ELA test is just one part of the spring 2015 Michigan Merit Examination (MME). The MME also includes ACT Plus Writing, WorkKeys, and the M-STEP mathematics, science, and social studies tests. All grade 11 students are required to take the complete MME, as well as Grade 12 students who have not previously been included in Michigan’s accountability calculations. Grade 11 and 12 students who do not have valid scores in all content areas—ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies—are eligible (but not required) to re-take the MME. (See the December 8, 2014 issue of the *Spotlight* at www.michigan.gov/mstep for more information on students required and eligible to take the MME.)

Accommodations

The OSA has prepared several documents designed to provide meaningful new information and updates on student supports and accommodations. The documents include:

- *M-STEP, MI-Access, and WIDA Student Supports and Accommodations Table;*
- *M-STEP Math and English Language Arts Read-Aloud Guidelines;*
- *M-STEP and MI-Access Bilingual Word-to-Word Glossaries List;*
- *M-STEP, MI-Access, and WIDA Scribing Protocol;*
- *Michigan Accommodations Manual for M-STEP, MI-Access, and WIDA; and*
- *Recommended Qualifications and Guidelines for Use of Translators and Language Interpreters for the M-STEP and MI-Access Assessments.*

These documents are available at www.michigan.gov/mstep. They outline important changes, including, but not limited to:

- Some supports that previously had been considered an accommodation are now considered a test administration practice. They are found on page one of the *M-STEP, MI-Access, and WIDA Student Supports and Accommodations Table*.
- A student does not need to have these practices outlined in an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) in order for a school to use them with that student or groups of students. However, if the need for a support is listed on the IEP (as a need or accommodation), it **must** be provided for the student.

Special Materials

Following is a list of special materials that may be ordered on the OSA's Secure Site (www.michigan.gov/baa-secure) for the M-STEP ELA tests. Districts needing these materials could begin placing orders on January 26, 2015.

- **Braille:** Schools/Districts with students needing braille versions of the assessment must select that option for each individual student in the Secure Site. Contracted braille is the order default for this paper-pencil material. However, if uncontracted braille is needed, schools/districts were asked to send a written request to baa@michigan.gov by no later than January 30th, 2015.
- **Enlarged Print for Paper/Pencil:** Students needing enlarged print should have the enlarged print form of the assessment ordered for them via the Secure Site.
- **English Glossary Reference Sheets for Mathematics and ELA Paper/Pencil:** This designated support provides students with grade- and context-appropriate definitions of construct-irrelevant terms. This support may be useful for students who need to use a dictionary on a regular basis in the classroom because of an individual student need. This support is not intended as a universal tool.

Spotlight

The information included in this document was pulled largely from past issues of the *Spotlight*, the OSA's weekly online newsletter designed to inform people in the field about developments related to student assessment and accountability. To obtain past or current issues of the *Spotlight*, go to www.michigan.gov/mstep. To sign up to receive future issues of the *Spotlight*, go to <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MIMDE/subscriber/new>, enter your e-mail address, and select *Spotlight* under "Student Assessment."

Questions

If you have additional questions about the ELA test, please send an e-mail to baa@michigan.gov. If you have questions about accountability, please send an e-mail to MDE-Accountability@michigan.gov. For phone assistance with assessment or accountability issues, please call 877-560-8378 and select the appropriate menu option (listen carefully as the options changed on January 29, 2015).