

2018 Kyote Reading Exam Standards

The KYOTE Reading Test for the 2017-18 academic year was written by two reading professors with many years of experience in teaching reading and the development of reading assessments. The passages range from 9th grade to 14th grade level. There are six passages on each individual's test, with a variety of questions reflecting the necessary skills to read on college level. These are main idea, detail, inference, vocabulary, transitions and patterns, fact and opinion, tone, and author's purpose. The passages also have a variety of subjects, from science to English grammar and literature, from mathematics and history.

The (approximate) distribution of the kinds of questions in the item pool is as follows: MI (Main Idea)= 19%; DE (Detail)= 13%; INF (inference) = 21%; ORG (Organization) which contains transitions and patterns=13%; TAP (Tone, Author's Purpose)=20%; and VOC (Vocabulary)= 13%. Individual exams may vary from this distribution but each student will be tested on each of these sub-skills of reading. In their results, students will also receive a chart showing how they did on each one of these sub-skills.

Here are definitions of the standards on which the questions for the 2018 Kyote Reading Exam are based. Included are possible strategies for working with students as a class or as individuals if they are having difficulty with one or more of them.

Main Idea/Central Point Questions

The **main idea** is the point, the thought, that the author wants the reader to remember after having read the article. The term "main idea" is used most often to refer to the controlling idea of a paragraph, but it may also be used to refer to the most important idea in a passage of two or three paragraphs. Lately, the term has even been used for longer articles, probably because teachers don't want to confuse students with the introduction of another term. However, the term "**central point**" has previously been used for essay-length, chapters, or even whole

books. We have elected to incorporate both terms so that a student is not misled because of use of a term.

The **main idea** is usually taught from at least fourth grade on throughout reading instruction. It is helpful to tie the concepts of **main idea and central point** to the writing instructor's use of the terms "topic sentence" for paragraphs and "thesis" for longer writing assignments. These are mirror images of each other; the topic sentence is the main idea of the author's paragraph or paragraphs and the thesis is the main idea/central point of the author's essay, chapter, or book. In teaching or reviewing the concepts for standardized testing, it is helpful to review the common errors that students make, both in writing and reading. Often students in both cases select an idea, in writing, or a sentence in reading, that is too narrow and may actually be a particularly interesting detail that has caught the attention of the student. The reading student then loses sight of what he is supposed to have learned from the paragraph, and the writing student suddenly finds he or she has nothing more to say than the sentence that has just been written.

Here is an example of such a sentence:

The optometrist met the patient today.

On the other hand, students can select a sentence or write a sentence that is much too broad. The sentence is too big an idea for the paragraph or piece of writing that is being read or written to contain. The piece of writing or the article contains an idea that could fit under that umbrella, but the main idea of the passage is more specific than that broad statement.

An example is: Optometrists serve many people who have eye problems.

So, kind of like the three bears, the trick is to train students to look for and/or create a sentence that is "just right." All the other ideas or sentences in the paragraph or paper should support that idea. A possible example of a good **main idea** or **topic sentence** on this subject is:

Steve visited the optometrist today to determine how he is responding to cataract surgery.

The rest of the paragraph should offer sentences that support this one, such as sentences about his experience at the surgeon's, his ability to see clearly at this time, his observations about his changing sight, and, then, of course, what the optometrist has said.

An example of a **central point/thesis** statement might be:

Cataract surgery is becoming a common occurrence for the older population, and patients benefit from knowing exactly what will occur during such surgery.

The article will then follow, with paragraphs on how the diagnosis is made, the choices of a surgeon and site of the operation and guidance in how to make them, the operation itself, and then the post-surgery follow-up. All paragraphs should give information about the surgery from beginning to end care in order to support the central point, that patients need to know what to expect.

Detail Questions

Detail questions are the easiest to answer, because the answer appears right in the text. The student should be able to scan the passage and find the answer. The danger is that the student will, first, not have read the passage completely in an effort to save time, or, second, will not, when returning to the passage to find the answer, read carefully enough to be able to discern which of several close answers in the question is correct. Many reading instructors encourage the students to read the entire passage first, or at least skim it, in order to get the context and wider picture of all the questions, and then, when they have found the appropriate sentence or sentences, to take the time to read a sentence above and below the information they are looking for to ensure that they have all the information needed to make a good choice. Other reading instructors suggest that students skim the questions first, in order to know what they should look for in the passage. Whereas the first method possibly costs time, this method makes the possibility that the student will read with such concentration on finding answers that

he or she will miss information that is related to and needed for interpretation of more difficult answers. Teachers and/or students should make the choice of the method based on their own experiences. Naturally, in either case, they should be encouraged to read each choice and the question itself carefully before marking their choices.

Though **detail** questions are always answered in the text, occasionally, though all the information is there to make the correct choice, a small calculation or perhaps a small inference should be made. In other words, the exact answer is not in the text, but all that is necessary to get the answer is there. Here is an example:

Julie was born in the heat of summer, the 7th month of the year, right when the sky was alight with brilliant bursts of colored lights accompanied by deafening noises.

From this sentence, one could get the answer to the detail question like this one: When was Julie born? A good answer would be early in July, even though nowhere in this sentence is that stated explicitly.

Vocabulary:

The **vocabulary** questions in this test, as in most other tests, are directly concerned with words used in the text. The stem of the question will give directions telling where the word is used in the passage. Even if the student knows the meaning of the word, he or she should find the word in the passage and read the sentence where it appears carefully to determine which meaning is the most precise for this particular use. If the word is not part of the student's vocabulary, he or she should be taught, and should practice, how to use context clues to provide the best answer possible. If the student does know the word, he or she should choose the one closest to the meaning she knows that fits the context given. She should also consider secondary meanings as a possibility.

Students often look at a potential choice and then see if that choice fits well in the sentence where the vocabulary word is. While this technique is a good one, they must remember that wrong words can fit in the sentence grammatically and even meaningfully, but that doesn't make

the choice the best answer, the one closest to its established “dictionary” meaning and the one that will transfer in other situations.

Here is an example: The ardent discussion between the rich guy talking about taxes and the woman lacking health care was fascinating.

Words like “angry”, “entertaining”, and “devoted,” all could fit if they are placed in the sentence, but would be incorrect in that context. “Passionate” would be a better answer.

Transitions and Patterns of Organization

Transitions are words or phrases that connect ideas within a sentence or sentences or show how ideas relate to one another. Using transitions helps clarify ideas by connecting those ideas in a meaningful way. They function as signs that tell readers how to think about, organize, and react to the information being presented. Not only can transitions be used to connect ideas within a sentence or sentences within a paragraph, they can also connect ideas between paragraphs. Please note that different universities may have other ways of explaining these transitions, but for the purpose of the instruction you will need for this test, please use these explanations. The end result in understanding should be the same.

The main types of transitions are as follows:

ADDITION- These are transitions that add to an idea or give more information about an idea.

A few of these words and phrases are: In addition, furthermore, moreover, also, another, first, second, further, as well, and

Example: Carolyn was going to fix shrimp for dinner. She **also** decided to make a pasta salad.

TIME- These are transitions that tell when something happened. They can give the order or sequence of events or steps in a process or directions.

A few of these are: before, after, when, then, soon, in the meantime, first, second, immediately, finally, until, later, currently, subsequently

Example: **Before** I went to the doctor's office, I had lunch with friends.

Note that some words like first, second, etc. may be used in both of these first categories, so students will have to pay attention to the way the word is used and ask themselves if the word adds to an idea or shows a time relationship.

CONTRAST- These types of transitions are words or phrases that tell **how two ideas may differ** from one another in some way.

A few of these: in contrast, but, however, on the other hand, nevertheless, in spite of, despite, on the contrary, still, yet, notwithstanding, although

Example: **Although** the student in Mrs. Smith's math class did not study for the big exam, she managed to pass it anyway.

COMPARISON- These types of transitions are words or phrases that tell **how two ideas are similar** or like each other in some way.

A few of these: in the same way, likewise, just as, similarly, in like manner, both, same, just like

Example: Sara decided she wanted to purchase a blouse **just like** her friend Carolyn had.

Students confuse **comparison** (similarities) and **contrasts** (differences). Some think that comparison can be used for both showing similarities and differences. It is important for them to get these straight.

CAUSE AND EFFECT- These types of transitions give the reasons why or the result of an idea. Some sentences or paragraphs may have one and/or more causes and one and/or more effects, depending on how the transition word is used. These often involve more than one sentence.

A few of these: consequently, because, hence, so, therefore, if...then, since, thus, cause(s), effect(s)

Example: **Because** the student in Mrs. Smith's math class did not study for the exam, she did not pass it and received an F for the course.

Example: The twins were in different classes **because** their parents (1) wished to encourage them to develop their own friends and interests and (2) to discourage competitiveness between them.

ILLUSTRATION OR EXAMPLE- These types of transition illustrate or give an example of an idea to help in clarifying the author's meaning.

A few of these: for instance, for example, to illustrate, as an illustration, such as, specifically, to be specific

Example: I like to plant many kinds of vegetables in my garden. **For instance**, last week, I planted green beans and squash.

PLACE OR POSITION- These types of transitions show the spatial location of an idea.

A few of these: above, below, inside, outside, beyond, nearby, there, under

Example: Dr. Cannon placed a pillow **under** her husband's head because his neck was hurting.

CONCLUSION OR SUMMARY: These types of transitions let the reader know that the ideas are going to be concluded or summarized in some way.

A few of these: in conclusion, to summarize, in sum, to conclude, on the whole, in summary, finally, in the end

Example: **To conclude**, one should always consult the airline's mobile app before heading to the airport.

Patterns Of Organization

Patterns of organization simply tell the reader how a paragraph or passage is constructed in order that the reader can understand the content more easily.. Writers may use certain patterns to make sure the paragraph is structured in such a way as to make the ideas connect so these ideas make sense to the reader. Authors may choose to use transitions to indicate the pattern they are using, but that is not always the case. Some patterns are implied so the reader has to look for other signals to figure out the pattern. Here are the main patterns of organization that we use:

Simple List or List of Items: In this pattern, an author lists a number of ideas in a paragraph in no particular order. He may use addition transitions such as “first, next, also, furthermore, etc.” to let the reader know when he is moving from one idea to another. However, the use of “first, second, and so forth” indicates addition in such a case; it does not mean that the items occurred in this order, or even that there is such a priority to the items. It simply is a list, with no attachment of greater importance of one item than another.

Time Order: This pattern may also be called chronological order or sequence when the author describes the order in which events occur in time. The transitions that are mainly used in this pattern are words or phrases like “first, second, then, when, in the meantime, before and after”. The author may describe a process or the order in which things

are done or how they work , using time transitions as well. It is important to emphasize to students that the order of the details in the paragraph can be important because these events or processes occurred in that order in time, especially if the earlier mentioned transitions are used. If the order doesn't appear to be significant, then probably the pattern is one of addition.

Compare and/or Contrast: This pattern will discuss the similarities and/or differences among ideas, theories, concepts, objects, or persons. The author may choose to compare by using such transitions as “likewise, similarly or other comparison transitions” or the author may choose to contrast by using such transitions as “however, but, in contrast or other contrast transitions.” It is important to note that some authors choose to compare and contrast in the same paragraph or passage. A common error in noting (and writing) these patterns is that students confuse the meaning of the two words. “Compare” means to find similarities, and “contrast” means to find differences.

Definition and Example: This pattern will define a term or a phrase or even an idea or concept and then give one or more examples to explain the term. The transitions used here may be words or phrases like “such as, for example, for instance, to illustrate, etc.” Sometimes authors simply define with no examples given.

Generalization and Example: This pattern provides examples that help to explain or clarify a broad, general statement. The transitions that may be used in this pattern are words or phrases like “such as, for instance, for example, as an illustration, etc. “

Cause and Effect: This pattern describes how one or more things cause or are related to one another. Transition words or phrases that usually indicate a cause are words like “because, since, reason, leads to, due to, causes, etc”. and words like “consequently, results in, etc.” indicate an effect. What is important to note here is that some paragraphs or passages may have one or more causes and/or effects, creating a chain. When one thing is caused by or is the result of another, this pattern is indicated.

Teachers should try to find paragraphs that illustrate each pattern and have the students practice finding the transitions and the patterns of organization. There are many online resources that supply practice for this skill. To reinforce and transfer these concepts to another area, teachers can have students write paragraphs or short essays with each pattern. Teaching these patterns, or at least some of them, used to be the norm in university freshman composition courses, but the practice has changed lately.

Fact and Opinion

Learning to recognize **facts and opinions** while reading is an important critical reading skill. Many times authors, especially of textbooks, will mainly give the reader facts or objective evidence that can be proven. In other words, the reader can find out more about the statement by looking it up to discover whether or not it is true. Readers cannot assume that, just because something is written down or appears on the internet, it is a factual statement. Many students do assume that, however. Further, authors will present subjective information, which is information that cannot be proven true or false because it is based on an opinion. Sometimes these statements will contain value words or words that you and I place a different value on, which means those statements cannot be proven objectively. Here is an example:

Kentucky is home to the Kentucky Derby, which is held at Churchill Downs in Louisville.

This statement can be checked out by the reader and shown to be factual. However, the author could have written something like this:

Kentucky encourages gambling when it hosts the Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs in Louisville.

This statement is an opinion mixed with factual information because there is no way to prove that Kentucky wants people to gamble. The word “encourages” is a value word that cannot be proven objectively.

Now look at the next example:

When coming to the Kentucky Derby, people bet on horses, which is not something the state of Kentucky should be encouraging.

This statement is a mixture of a fact (people bet on horses at the Derby) and an opinion (Kentucky should not encourage people to bet on horses). Students need to realize that sometimes authors cleverly mix fact and opinions together. Being a critical reader will help the student separate the facts from the opinions. Teachers should try to find articles that the students can read to help them discern the difference between a fact and an opinion. There are many online resources that can assist with this skill.

Making an Inference

Making an inference is a critical reading skill that all students will need during their college career or as they move in to a profession. Making inferences involves reading between the lines to determine the author's implied meaning. Authors do not tell us everything they want us to know, but they will give us details that will help us come to a logical idea or conclusion. We arrive at this idea or conclusion by using logical reasoning. We are making an educated guess based on the clues the author gives us in the passage, or what is known, our own knowledge and experience, and logical reasoning. When working with students on making inferences, have them carefully look at the facts that are presented and draw conclusions based on those facts. It is important to note here that students can make faulty inferences or jump to the wrong conclusion when they read too much into the facts the author is presenting or add their own, sometimes faulty, information or previous conclusions, and then do not think logically about those facts. If a student reads that a person's weight is 250 pounds, the student might make the inference that the person is overweight when the student does not have enough information to know. If the person mentioned is 7 feet tall, then 250 pounds might not be considered overweight. There are many online resources, YouTube videos and examples that can assist with this skill. Using pictures or cartoons is a great way to introduce

inferences. Have the students look at the image and ask them what they see (what is known) and what logical inferences or conclusions they can make based on what they see. They may, of course, draw conclusions about the artist's opinions, but as long as they recognize that what they have is an opinion, they have used the skill well.

Author's Purpose and Tone

Purpose:

When an author sits down to write, he or she usually has a purpose in mind. The students need to remember when looking for the author's purpose to look at it from the author's point of view. This means that regardless of how the passage made the student feel, the author is approaching his or her subject matter with a purpose that has nothing to do with the student's feelings— only the author's. The main purposes for writing are:

To Inform- This purpose is the result occurs when an author presents the facts objectively. This type of article is written to enlighten the reader or provide the reader with more information about a topic. Authors of textbooks, reference books, or manuals mainly write to inform. A newspaper reporter may report the facts on the front page of the paper so his purpose is to inform the reader about a subject, and, theoretically, he does not insert his opinion into the article. If the same author writes a piece for the editorial page or the features section, then the convention is that the author can, and probably should, insert his own opinions as well as the opinions of others. Lately, however, opinion statements have been creeping into the articles written for the front page and news sections, sometimes confusing all of us.

To Persuade- When an author wants the reader to believe what he believes about a subject and is trying to compel readers to take action, convince them of an idea through argument or to reaffirm existing beliefs, he writes to persuade. Students can read examples of persuasive articles in the editorial section of the newspaper, sales brochures, or in advertisements. Another example is a campaign speech.

To Entertain- When an author wants to entertain or amuse readers, he writes to entertain. The author wants to evoke some emotional response in the reader with a story, poem, play or song. Magazine articles are sometimes written to entertain. The emotion evoked can be funny, sad, benevolent, loving, — any emotion.

There are other purposes, such as to incite, to argue, to punish, to extol, but in general these are all subsets of the ones given above.

The danger for students who are learning this critical reading skill is that they may be reading something that is mainly informative, but they themselves find it entertaining, so they think that is the purpose. For example, the student could find reading a newspaper article entertaining when the primary purpose of the article is to persuade him to a particular point of view. A student may read something that is supposed to entertain him, but he is not amused or entertained, so he thinks that is not the purpose. The student has to remove himself and his feelings from the article and simply ask why the author created it. A comedian wants to make us laugh and that is his purpose, but we do not always find what he says funny. However, that does not change his purpose.

Tone:

The **tone** of an article indicates the author's attitude about his or her subject. The author uses words and writing style to convey his or her tone to the reader. As with purpose, the student has to look at the material from the author's point of view and remove personal feelings. For example, an author may use words to convey anger, but the student is not moved to anger by the subject, so he or she does not determine the correct tone. Tone is usually described by adjectives; it would be helpful if students could review tone words and have a good understanding of what these words mean. Some examples of tone words are "optimistic, pessimistic, cynical, critical, depressed, solemn, sarcastic, ironic, indignant, cheerful, vindictive, subjective, objective, or outraged." These are only a few examples and many more can be accessed online. Students should practice this skill by reading different kinds of articles and identifying the author's tone. An author may

express more than one attitude or belief about his subject, so there may be more than one kind of tone indicated. Again, there are many online resources to assist with this skill.

Some simple examples:

Father: "We are going on a vacation."

Son: "That's great!"

The tone of the son is very cheerful while the tone of the father is matter-of-fact.

Father: "We can't go on vacation this summer. I'm sorry."

Son: "Oh, great! That's just what I expected."

The tone of the father is apologetic or regretful while the tone of the son is sarcastic.

Here is one where two adjectives may describe the tone best:

Newspaper: The new drug worked in the first pilot trial with 80% recovering.

Reader: Oh! We now have a cure for cancer!

The tone of the first sentence is objective; it gives only the facts, with no emotions. The tone of the second sentence is thrilled and hopeful.

Word choice can determine tone, and the students need to read carefully to discover how to develop understanding of this critical reading skill.

