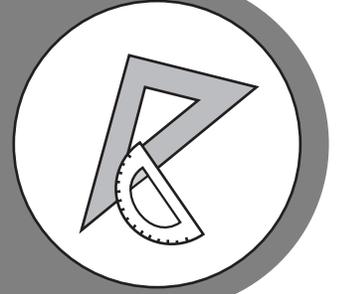


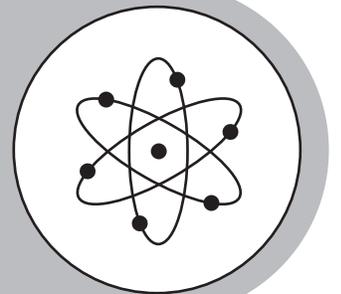
AMERICAN LITERATURE
& COMPOSITION



Study



Guide



Georgia End-Of-Course Tests



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INTRODUCTION

This study guide is designed to help students prepare to take the Georgia End-of-Course Test (EOCT) for *American Literature and Composition*. This study guide provides information about the EOCT, tips on how to prepare for it, and some suggested strategies students can use to perform their best.

What is the EOCT? The EOCT program was created to improve student achievement through effective instruction and assessment of the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) specific to the eight EOCT core high school courses. The EOCT program also helps to ensure that all Georgia students have access to a rigorous curriculum that meets high performance standards. The purpose of the EOCT is to provide diagnostic data that can be used to enhance the effectiveness of schools' instructional programs.

The Georgia End-of-Course Testing program is a result of the A+ Educational Reform Act of 2000, O.C.G.A. §20-2-281. This act requires that the Georgia Department of Education create end-of-course assessments for students in grades 9 through 12 for the following core high school subjects:

Mathematics

- Mathematics I: Algebra/Geometry/Statistics
- Mathematics II: Geometry/Algebra II/Statistics

Social Studies

- United States History
- Economics/Business/Free Enterprise

Science

- Biology
- Physical Science

English Language Arts

- Ninth Grade Literature and Composition
- American Literature and Composition

Getting started: The HOW TO USE THE STUDY GUIDE section on page 2 outlines the contents in each section, lists the materials you should have available as you study for the EOCT, and suggests some steps for preparing for the *American Literature and Composition* EOCT.

HOW TO USE THE STUDY GUIDE

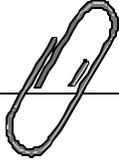
This study guide is designed to help you prepare to take the *American Literature and Composition* EOCT. It will give you valuable information about the EOCT, explain how to prepare to take the EOCT, and provide some opportunities to practice for the EOCT. The study guide is organized into three sections. Each section focuses on a different aspect of the EOCT.

The **OVERVIEW OF THE EOCT** section on page 4 gives information about the test: dates, time, question format, number of questions, and types of reading passages that will be on the *American Literature and Composition* EOCT. This information can help you better understand the testing situation and what you will be asked to do.

The **PREPARING FOR THE EOCT** section that begins on page 5 provides helpful information on study skills and general test-taking skills and strategies. It explains what you should do before the test to ensure that you are prepared and what you should do during the test to ensure the best test-taking situation possible.

The **TEST CONTENT** section that begins on page 11 explains what the *American Literature and Composition* EOCT specifically measures. When you know the test content and how you will be asked to demonstrate your knowledge, it will help you be better prepared for the EOCT. This section also contains specific test-taking strategies for successfully answering questions on the EOCT.

With some time, determination, and guided preparation, you will be better prepared to take the *American Literature and Composition* EOCT.



GET IT TOGETHER

In order to make the most of this study guide, you should have the following:

Materials

- * This study guide
- * Pen or pencil
- * Paper
- * Highlighter

Resources:

- * Dictionary
- * English textbook
- * A teacher or other adult

Study Space:

- * Comfortable (but not too comfortable)
- * Good lighting
- * Minimal distractions
- * Enough work space

Time Commitment:

- * When are you going to study?
- * How long are you going to study?

Determination:

- * Willingness to improve
- * Plan for meeting goals



SUGGESTED STEPS FOR USING THIS STUDY GUIDE

- 1** Familiarize yourself with the structure and purpose of the study guide. (You should have already read the INTRODUCTION and HOW TO USE THE STUDY GUIDE. Take a few minutes to look through the rest of the study guide to become familiar with how it is arranged.)
- 2** Learn about the test and the performance expectations. (Read OVERVIEW OF THE EOCT.)
- 3** Improve your study skills and test-taking strategies. (Read PREPARING FOR THE EOCT.)
- 4** Learn what the test will assess by studying the standards in each domain. Also, study the strategies for answering questions that assess the standards in the domain. (Read TEST CONTENT.)
- 5** Answer the sample questions at the end of each domain section. Check your answers against the annotated answers to see how well you did. (See TEST CONTENT.)

OVERVIEW OF THE EOCT

Good test takers understand the importance of knowing as much about a test as possible. This information can help you determine how to study and prepare for the EOCT and how to pace yourself during the test. The box below gives you a snapshot of the *American Literature and Composition EOCT*.



THE EOCT AT A GLANCE

Administration Dates:

The EOCT has three primary annual testing dates: once in the spring, once in the summer, and once in the winter. There are also midmonth, online tests given in August, September, October, November, February, and March.

Administration Time:

Each EOCT is composed of two sections, and students are given 60 minutes to complete each section. There is also a short stretch break between the two sections of the test.

Question Format:

All the questions on the EOCT are multiple choice.

Number of Questions:

Each section of the *American Literature EOCT* contains 40 questions; there are a total of 80 questions on the *American Literature EOCT*.

Impact on Course Grade:

A student's EOCT score is averaged as 15% of his/her final course grade.

Reading Passages:

There will be informational and literary passages on the *American Literature and Composition EOCT*. All the passages will either be pieces of American literature or pieces about American literature. Please see page 12 for more information on reading passages. Sample reading passages and questions are located in the TEST CONTENT sections of this guide.

If you have additional administrative questions regarding the EOCT, please visit the Georgia Department of Education Web site at www.doe.k12.ga.us, see your teacher, or see your school test coordinator.

PREPARING FOR THE EOCT



WARNING!

You cannot prepare for this kind of test in one night. Questions will ask you to apply your knowledge, not list specific facts. Preparing for the EOCT will take time, effort, and practice.

In order to do your best on the *American Literature and Composition* EOCT, it is important that you take the time necessary to prepare for this test and develop those skills that will help you take the EOCT.

First, you need to make the most of your classroom experiences and test-preparation time by using good **study skills**. Second, it is helpful to know general **test-taking strategies** to ensure that you will achieve your best score.

Study Skills



A LOOK AT YOUR STUDY SKILLS

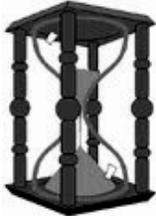
Before you begin preparing for this test, you might want to consider your answers to the following questions. You may write your answers here or on a separate piece of paper.

1. How would you describe yourself as a student?
Response: _____
2. What are your study skills strengths and/or weaknesses as a student?
Response: _____
3. How do you typically prepare for an English language arts test?
Response: _____
4. Are there study methods you find particularly helpful? If so, what are they?
Response: _____
5. Describe an ideal study situation (environment).
Response: _____
6. Describe your actual study environment.
Response: _____
7. What can you change about the way you study to make your study time more productive?
Response: _____

Effective study skills for preparing for the EOCT can be divided into three categories:

- ◆ **Time Management**
- ◆ **Organization**
- ◆ **Active Participation**

Time Management



Do you have a plan for preparing for the EOCT? Students often have good intentions for studying and preparing for a test, but without a plan, many fall short of their goals. Here are some strategies to consider when developing your study plan:

- ◆ Set realistic goals for what you want to accomplish during each study session and chart your progress.
- ◆ Study during your most productive time of the day.
- ◆ Study for reasonable amounts of time. Marathon studying is not productive.
- ◆ Take frequent breaks. Breaks can help you stay focused. Doing some quick exercises (e.g., sit-ups or jumping jacks) can help you stay alert.
- ◆ Be consistent. Establish your routine and stick to it.
- ◆ Study the most challenging test content first.
- ◆ For each study session, build in time to review what you learned in your last study session.
- ◆ Evaluate your accomplishments at the end of each study session.
- ◆ Reward yourself for a job well done.

Organization

You don't want to waste your study time. Searching for materials, trying to find a place to study, and debating what and how to study can all keep you from having a productive study session. Get organized and be prepared. Here are a few organizational strategies to consider:



- ◆ Establish a study area that has minimal distractions.
- ◆ Gather your materials in advance.
- ◆ Develop and implement your study plan. (See Appendices A–D for sample study plan sheets).

Active Participation



Students who actively study will learn and retain information longer. Active studying also helps you stay more alert and be more productive while learning new information. What is active studying? It can be anything that gets you to interact with the material you are studying. Here are a few suggestions:

- ◆ Carefully read the information and then **DO** something with it. Mark the important points with a highlighter, circle them with a pen, write notes on them, or summarize the information in your own words.
- ◆ Ask questions. As you study, questions often come into your mind. Write them and actively seek the answers.
- ◆ Create sample test questions and answer them.
- ◆ Find a friend who is also planning to take the test and quiz each other.

Test-taking Strategies

There are many test-taking strategies that you can use before and during a test to help you have the most successful testing situation possible. Below are a few questions to help you take a look at your test-taking skills.

A LOOK AT YOUR TEST-TAKING SKILLS



As you prepare to take the EOCT, you might want to consider your answers to the following questions. You may write your answers here or on your own paper.

1. How would you describe your test-taking skills?

Response: _____

2. How do you feel when you are taking a test?

Response: _____

3. List the strategies that you already know and use when you are taking a test.

Response: _____

4. List test-taking behaviors you use when preparing for and taking a test that contribute to your success.

Response: _____

5. What would you like to learn about taking tests?

Response: _____

Suggested Strategies to Prepare for the EOCT

 **Learn from the past.** Think about your daily/weekly grades in your English language arts classes (past and present) to answer the following questions.

- In which specific areas of English language arts were you or are you successful?

Response: _____

- Is there anything that has kept you from achieving higher scores?

Response: _____

- What changes should you implement to achieve higher scores?

Response: _____

Before taking the EOCT, work toward removing or minimizing any obstacles that might stand in the way of performing your best. The test-preparation ideas and test-taking strategies in this section are designed to help you accomplish this.

 **Be prepared.** The best way to perform well on the EOCT is to be prepared. In order to do this, it is important that you know what knowledge or skills will be measured on the ***American Literature and Composition EOCT*** and then practice understanding and using those skills. The TEST CONTENT section of this study guide is designed to help you understand the specific standards that are on the ***American Literature and Composition EOCT*** and give you suggestions for how to study the standards that will be assessed. Take the time to read through this material and follow the study suggestions. You can also ask your English language arts teacher for any suggestions he or she might offer on preparing for the EOCT.

 **Start now.** Don't wait until the last minute to start preparing. Begin early and pace yourself. By preparing a little bit each day, you will retain the information longer and increase your confidence level. Find out when the EOCT will be administered so you can allocate your time appropriately.

Suggested Strategies the Day before the EOCT

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

- ✓ **Review what you learned from this study guide.**
 1. Review the general test-taking strategies discussed in TOP 10 SUGGESTED STRATEGIES DURING THE EOCT on page 10.
 2. Review the content domain–specific information discussed in the section TEST CONTENT, beginning on page 11.
 3. Focus your attention on the domain, or domains, that you are most in need of improving.

- ✓ **Take care of yourself.**
 1. Try to get a good night’s sleep. Most people need an average of eight hours, but everyone’s sleep needs are different.
 2. Don’t drastically alter your routine. If you go to bed too early, you might lie in bed thinking about the test. You want to get enough sleep so you can do your best.

Suggested Strategies the Morning of the EOCT



Eat a good breakfast. Eat some food that has protein in it for breakfast (and for lunch if the test is given in the afternoon). Some examples of foods high in protein are peanut butter, meat, and eggs. Protein gives you long-lasting, consistent energy that will stay with you through the test to help you concentrate better. Some people believe it is wise to eat some sugar before a test, claiming it gives them an energy boost. In reality, the energy boost is very short lived, and you actually end up with less energy than before you ate the sugar. Also, don’t eat too much. A heavy meal can make you feel tired. So think about what you eat before the test.



Dress appropriately. If you are too hot or too cold during the test, it can affect your performance. It is a good idea to dress in layers, so you can stay comfortable regardless of the room temperature and keep your mind on the EOCT.



Arrive for the test on time. Racing late into the testing room can cause you to start the test feeling anxious. You want to be on time and prepared.

TOP 10

Suggested Strategies during the EOCT

These general test-taking strategies can help you do your best during the EOCT.

- 1 Focus on the test.**  Try to block out whatever is going on around you. Take your time and think about what you are asked to do. Listen carefully to all the directions.
- 2 Budget your time.**  Be sure that you allocate an appropriate amount of time to work on each question on the test.
- 3 Take a quick break if you begin to feel tired.** To do this, put your pencil down, relax in your chair, and take a few deep breaths. Then, sit up straight, pick up your pencil, and begin to concentrate on the test again. Remember that each test section is only 60 minutes.
- 4 Use positive self-talk.** If you find yourself saying negative things to yourself such as “I can’t pass this test,” it is important to recognize that you are doing this. Stop and think positive thoughts such as “I prepared for this test, and I am going to do my best.” Letting the negative thoughts take over can affect how you take the test and can influence your test score.
- 5 Mark in your test booklet.**  Mark key ideas or things you want to come back to in your test booklet. Remember that only the answers marked on your answer sheet will be scored.
- 6 Read the entire question and the possible answer choices.** It is important to read the entire question so you know what it is asking. Read each possible answer choice. Do not mark the first one that “looks good.”
- 7 Use what you know.**  Use what you have learned in class, from this study guide, and during your study sessions to help you answer the questions.
- 8 Use content domain-specific strategies to answer the questions.** In the TEST CONTENT section, there are a number of specific strategies that you can use to help improve your test performance. Spend time learning these helpful strategies so you can use them while taking the test.
Think logically. If you have tried your best to answer a question but you are not sure, use the process of elimination. Look at each possible answer choice. If it does not seem like a logical response, eliminate it. Do this until you’ve narrowed your choices. If this does not work, take your best educated guess. It is better to mark something than to leave it blank.
- 10 Check your answers.** When you have finished the test, go back and check your work.

A WORD ON TEST ANXIETY

It is normal to have some stress when preparing for and taking a test. It is what helps motivate us to study and try our best. Some students, however, experience anxiety that goes beyond normal test “jitters.” If you feel you are suffering from test anxiety that is keeping you from performing at your best, please speak to your school counselor, who can direct you to resources to help you address this problem.

TEST CONTENT



Up to this point in this study guide, you have been learning various strategies on how to prepare for and take the EOCT. This section focuses on what will be tested. It also includes a section of sample questions that will let you apply what you have learned in your classes and from this study guide.

The Georgia End-of-Course Test (EOCT) for *American Literature and Composition* is designed to test four major areas of knowledge, called **content domains**. The content domains are broad categories. Each of the content domains is broken down into smaller ideas. These smaller ideas are called **standards**. Each content domain contains standards that cover different ideas related to its content domain. Each question on the EOCT measures an individual standard within a content domain.

UNDERSTANDING THE STANDARDS

One way to think about **content domains** and **standards** is to think about a supermarket. Supermarkets often group similar foods in the same aisles or areas of the store. For example, the section of the store marked “Fresh Fruits” will be a section filled with apples, oranges, and bananas, to name just a few. So the part of the store called “Fresh Fruits” is like the domain name, and all the various items—apples, oranges, bananas—are the standards that fall under that domain.

The four content domains for the *American Literature and Composition* EOCT are important for several reasons. Together they represent the ability to understand what you read and communicate with others. Another, more immediate reason that the content domains are important has to do with test preparation. The best way to prepare for any test is to study and know the material measured on the test. Since the *American Literature and Composition* EOCT covers the four content domains and nothing else, it is a good idea to learn as much about these domains as you can. The more you understand about these domains, the greater your opportunity to be successful on the EOCT is.

The chart below lists the four content domains for the *American Literature and Composition* EOCT.

CONTENT DOMAINS

- I. Reading and American Literature
- II. Reading Across the Curriculum/Listening, Speaking, and Viewing
- III. Writing
- IV. Conventions

A Note on Reading Passages

The questions for Content Domains I and II will be based on informational and literary passages. Informational passages (nonfiction) typically share knowledge and/or convey messages, give instructions, or relate ideas by making connections between the familiar and unfamiliar. Informational writing is most commonly found in academic, personal, and/or job-related areas. Examples of informational writing include letters, biographical accounts, definitions, directions, abstracts, essays, reviews, and critiques. You can find informational passages in newspapers, magazines, and textbooks. Here is a short sample of what an *informational passage* might look like.

The Dime Novel

What were people reading in the latter half of the 19th century? One popular type of book was known as the dime novel. Dime novels were typically cheaply made paperback books that cost about a dime. Dime novels were popular from 1860 to around the turn of the century. These short novels were often historical action adventures or detective stories. The stories tended to be sensational and melodramatic. When Beadle and Adams published the first dime novel, it quickly became a huge success, selling over 300,000 copies in one year.

The information in the passage above is strictly factual. Literary passages, however, will tell a story or express an idea. Literary passages (fiction) often have characters and a plot structure. Examples of literary writing include short stories, novels, narratives, poetry, and drama. Here is a short sample of what a *literary passage* might look like. This excerpt is from Mark Twain's novel *Life on the Mississippi*, in which Twain explains what it was like to become a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River.

When I returned to the pilothouse St. Louis was gone and I was lost. Here was a piece of river which was all down in my book, but I could make neither head nor tail of it; you understand, it was turned around. I had seen it when coming upstream, but I had never faced about to see how it looked when it was behind me. My heart broke again, for it was plain that I had got to learn this troublesome river *both ways*.

Studying the Content Domains

You should plan to study/review the standards for ALL the content domains. To learn what the EOCT will cover, work through this TEST CONTENT section. It is organized by the content domains into the following areas:

- **A Look at the Content Domain:** an overview of what will be assessed in the content domain
- **Spotlight on the Standards:** information about the specific standards that will be assessed (Note: The names of the standards may not be the exact names used by the Georgia Department of Education. Some of the names in this guide may have been modified to reflect the fact that this book is designed for students and not for professional educators.)
- **Sample Questions:** sample questions *similar* to those that appear on the EOCT
- **Answers to the Sample Questions:** in-depth explanations of the answers to the sample questions

Content Domain I: Reading and American Literature



A Look at Content Domain I

Test questions in this domain will ask you to demonstrate an understanding of how cultural and historical circumstances affect the structure and meaning of American literature. Your answers to the questions will help show how well you can perform on the following standards:

- Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structures and characteristics of American fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama and provide evidence from the work to support understanding
- Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of theme in American literature and provide evidence to support understanding
- Relate literary works to their historical setting or to their contemporary context
- Identify important ideas and locate support for those concepts within the text
- Understand and acquire new vocabulary and use it correctly



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structures and characteristics of American fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama and provide evidence from the work to support understanding ★

This standard is the most comprehensive of all the standards for the *American Literature and Composition EOCT*. It encompasses all forms of American literature. You must draw upon your knowledge of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama to answer questions in this domain. To review, you should refresh your knowledge of these different genres, of common literary terms, and of terms specific to certain types of literature.

The following types of passages may be used:

- Essay (literary, persuasive, instructional)
- Workplace documents such as job applications; consumer documents such as advertisements and Web pages
- Biography
- Autobiography (including memoir and personal narrative)
- Expository (informational)
- Narrative (fiction and nonfiction)
- Speech
- Poem
- Drama

Authors use a variety of techniques to make literature more powerful, more effective, and more memorable. Using these techniques allows writers to convey deep meanings with their words. (You are probably already familiar with a number of literary terms. If you wish to review other literary terms not defined here, see the BASIC LITERARY ELEMENTS section on pages 81–83.)

Questions for this standard will measure your knowledge of common literary elements and your ability to use them to interpret what you read. The best way to prepare for these questions is to study literary elements and terms, be sure you understand them, and be able to identify examples of them. You might be given a word, phrase, or sentence from the text and asked to apply the correct literary term to it. Conversely, you might be given the literary term and asked to choose which phrase or sentence is an example of it. In addition, you should be able to analyze the impact of these literary elements on a piece of literature. Below is an explanation of some common literary terms on which you may be tested.

1. Alliteration. Alliteration is the repetition of identical beginning consonant sounds. You may have been introduced to alliteration with the tongue twister, “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.” The repetition of the consonant p makes this line memorable. Alliteration adds emphasis to meaning and a rhythmic quality to a line of poetry or a sentence in a short story.

2. Flashback. In flashback, the author interrupts the scene of a narrative to tell about earlier events. The event is often told from a particular character’s point of view, perhaps as he or she recalls an event from memory: “Lana thought back to her first visit to the beach.” This technique allows writers to reveal more about character and plot without disturbing the momentum of the story. Look for time order words such as *when*, *after*, *before*, and *earlier* to help you detect flashback.

3. Foreshadowing. An author often gives hints or clues as to what will happen in a story. This technique is called foreshadowing. Foreshadowing prepares the reader for what is to come, at the same time creating suspense. For example, as a boy is packing for a camping trip, the author may describe a multi-tooled camping knife in great detail. That

same knife will become significant later as a tool for making a fire when the boy finds himself alone in the wilderness. The author has left a clue as to its importance.

4. Hyperbole. Pronounced “hi PER bowl lee,” hyperbole simply means exaggeration. Authors use hyperbole for emphasis or humorous effect. The sentence “She tramped through the house like an elephant thundering through the jungle” is an example of hyperbole. It creates a vivid but exaggerated picture of how a girl moves through a house.

5. Irony. Does it seem like it always rains on the weekends, never on weekdays? That’s *ironic*. There are three types of irony. When things happen that are in direct contrast to what we expect (or would like to happen), **situational irony** occurs. When people say one thing but mean the opposite—such as saying “Isn’t this a *lovely* day?” on the rainy Saturday you had hoped to play a baseball game—they use **verbal irony**. The third type, **dramatic irony**, happens when the reader knows something the character doesn’t—that the character is about to have a surprise party, for example.

6. Metaphor. Metaphor is one of the most commonly used literary devices. A metaphor compares two things directly, without using the words *like* or *as*. One famous metaphor comes from William Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*: “All the world’s a stage, And all the men and women merely players.” Here, and throughout the rest of this speech, Shakespeare says that daily life is pretty much like a stage play. Metaphor is a sort of shorthand, allowing an author to convey a lot of information in a very condensed way. **Extended metaphors** continue the comparison throughout the work. In the novel *A River Runs Through It*, Norman Maclean uses the river as an extended metaphor for life. Extended metaphors are a common structure in poetry.

7. Onomatopoeia. *Splash, fizz, honk, whoosh, buzz*—all of these words are examples of onomatopoeia (ah no MAH toe PEE uh), or the technique of forming words that imitate specific sounds. Onomatopoeic words precisely fill a void, bridging a critical gap between sound and written language.

8. Paradox. A paradox is a statement that at first seems self-contradictory but that upon reflection makes sense. The phrase “less is more” is an example of a paradox. In poetry, paradoxes are used to provoke fresh insight from old ideas.

9. Personification. Personification gives human characteristics to animals, objects, or ideas. You’ve probably read some of Aesop’s fables. In fables, the animals exhibit human qualities such as greed, compassion, cleverness, and wisdom, usually in order to teach a lesson about life. Personification helps us relate the unfamiliar to the familiar and strengthens the meaning of a poem or story.

10. Pun. Puns are plays on words that have similar meanings, as in the following example: “When you step on a *scale* and discover you have gained ten pounds, it’s time to *scale* back your eating habits.” Although puns are usually clever and witty, they often make us groan when we understand the double meanings of the words. Authors use puns most often to add humor, but also to call attention to dialogue or to illuminate character.

11. Refrain. “Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way! Oh, what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh!” This is probably one of the most famous examples of a refrain, a word, phrase, or series of lines that is repeated, adding rhythm and emphasis to a song or poem. Speechmakers also use refrains to make speeches more dramatic, rhythmic, and memorable.

12. Repetition. Repetition is simply the act of repeating words and phrases throughout a work, or repeating literary devices such as metaphors, symbols, or types of imagery. Repetition calls attention to the idea that is being repeated and gives it added importance. For example, an author may use an image of a watch several times during a story. The image may be emphasizing the idea that time passes by swiftly. You can be sure that whatever is being repeated in a story or poem is essential to understanding its complete meaning.

13. Simile. Like a metaphor, a simile compares two things. The difference is that a simile uses explicit words to make the comparison, such as *like* or *as*. Similes have the same effect as metaphors: they say a great deal using very few words. Here is an example: “The ants trailed under the canopy of leaves like a train moving slowly into the station.” Note that the comparison is unexpected; we don’t usually associate ants with trains. Yet the comparison helps us picture the ants moving at a slow, steady pace, one after the other, like the cars on a train.

14. Symbol. A symbol is a person, place, or object that has significance beyond its surface meaning. Symbols are common in everyday life; people use flags to represent countries, doves to represent peace, roses to represent love. In literature, symbols are usually not so obvious. For example, on a literal level a plow is just a farm tool, but it can take on deeper significance depending on its context. In a story about a family establishing a farm during the 1800s, the plow may come to symbolize the demanding and endless drudgery of pioneer life.

15. Tone. The tone is the emotion created by the author’s use of language or by a character’s words and actions. It is also the author’s attitude or feeling toward a person, a thing, a place, an event, or a situation. For example, the tone may be formal, informal, playful, ironic, optimistic, or pessimistic. Varying the words and punctuation can change the tone of a character’s speech dramatically.

Dialogue	Tone
“Will you give me the key?” he pleaded.	Begging
“May I please have the key?” he asked.	Polite
“Give me the key right now!” he screamed.	Angry

16. Understatement. Understatement is the opposite of hyperbole. It minimizes or lessens the importance of what is meant. For example, if you are sweltering in 100-degree heat in Atlanta and you say, “It’s a little warm here,” you have made an understatement.

These literary terms are common to many of the types of American literature that you will see on the EOCT. To make your review easier, the rest of this standard is divided into the more specific types of literature on which you will be tested: fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama. **Fiction** is a literary genre based on imagination and not necessarily on fact. Short stories and novels are examples. **Nonfiction**, on the other hand, is a literary genre based on fact. Essays, editorials, and biographies are works of nonfiction. **Poetry** is a literary genre that may encompass a variety of metered or rhythmically measured lines and is intended to evoke an emotional experience in the reader. **Drama** is a literary genre intended to be performed by actors on a stage.

FICTION

In the fiction section of this standard, you will be asked questions about literary elements found in works of American fiction from different time periods. In addition to the literary terms previously discussed, you will need to review terms more specific to fiction. These include terms relating to the work's structure. The most common structure of a novel or story is **chronological**. The story is arranged in order of time from the beginning to the end. The following structures are less common:

An **epistolary novel** is a novel written in the form of letters, diary/journal entries, postcards, or e-mail. There may be several letter writers, but the author is omniscient. Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* is an example of a contemporary epistolary novel.

In a **frame narrative**, a story is told within a story. A narrator often relates the story. *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, by Washington Irving, is an example.

In medias res is a Latin term for "in the middle of things." The novel or story begins with a significant moment. The rest of the novel fills in the events leading up to the significant moment. Flashback is used extensively in this novel structure. *A Farewell to Arms*, by Ernest Hemingway, is written in this structure.

In addition to knowing the structure of a novel or short story, you will be asked to identify the influences on American literature. The standard *Relate American literary works to other literary documents or non-literary documents from their historical period or setting* will provide you with the necessary background on influences from American literary periods. You should also review Greek and Roman myths and literature. The chart of gods and goddesses on the next page should get you started. Books on Greek and Roman mythology can give you more of a background.

Greek Name	Roman Name	Description
Zeus	Jupiter, Jove	King of the gods
Hera	Juno	Goddess of fertility; wife of Zeus
Aphrodite	Venus	Goddess of love
Apollo	Apollo	God of music, poetry, and prophecy
Ares	Mars	God of war
Athena	Minerva	Goddess of wisdom
Eros	Cupid	God of love
Hades	Pluto	God of the underworld
Poseidon	Neptune	God of the sea

Questions for this standard might look like the following:

Which quote by Henry David Thoreau BEST reflects transcendentalist ideals?

- A It is never too late to give up your prejudices.
- B Beware of all enterprises that require new clothes.
- C On tops of mountains, as everywhere to hopeful souls, it is always morning.
- D Read the best books first, or you may not have a chance to read them at all.

To answer this question, you need to remember that transcendentalists believed in the unity of all beings, the innate goodness of humans, and the divinity found in nature. Choice C, which mentions all three of these aspects, is the BEST answer. The other three quotes make strong statements, but none discuss the ideas of nature and connectedness as well as C.

Read the sample passage below.

from *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

The sun was up so high when I waked, that I judged it was after eight o'clock. I laid there in the grass and the cool shade, thinking about things and feeling rested and ruther comfortable and satisfied. I could see the sun out at one or two holes, but mostly it was big trees all about, and gloomy in there amongst them. There was freckled places on the ground where the light sifted down through the leaves, and the freckled places swapped about a little, showing there was a little breeze up there.

What does the imagery in the passage BEST suggest?

- A Huck understands the world by observing nature.
- B Huck is more comfortable indoors than in the woods.
- C Huck’s future is bright and hopeful.
- D Huck’s night has been long and restless.

In the passage, Huck knows what time it is by the location of the sun, and he knows there is a breeze in the treetops because the “freckled places” move on the ground. He is a good observer of nature, and the fact that he is laying in the grass “thinking about things” suggests he is trying to understand larger issues. The correct answer choice, **A**, best describes the function of the imagery in the passage. The other answer choices are all inaccurate: he is clearly comfortable in the woods; in spite of the distant sunlight the overall scene is cool and gloomy; and he has obviously slept well because he is “rested and ruther comfortable.”

STRATEGY BOX—Know the Lingo

Some of the questions on the *American Literature and Composition EOCT* will test your knowledge of common basic literary terms. If you understand what these terms mean, you will be able to better answer these questions. Study the terms until you are comfortable with them. Learning these literary terms will help you on more than just the EOCT. If you think about them whenever you read, you will begin to understand the many facets of literature.

NONFICTION

The questions for this standard may be based on any type of nonfiction material. You will be asked to analyze and explain the structures of nonfiction works such as letters, journals and diaries, speeches, and essays.

A question that addresses nonfiction may look like this:

Which statement BEST describes a main difference between journals and diaries?

- A A journal is more likely than a diary to be published.
- B A journal mostly contains secret thoughts and feelings.
- C A diary mostly records a specific event or period of time.
- D A diary is more formal and carefully written than a journal.

The question specifically draws on your knowledge of diaries and journals. A **diary** is an autobiographical record of the writer’s actions, feelings, and thoughts. Written to remain private, a diary can include very personal and frank information. A **journal** is a record of events and ideas, but of a less personal nature. Someone traveling around the world might

keep a journal detailing all the sights and sounds of her voyage. Upon her return, she might share her journal willingly with others. Choice **A** is the only choice that correctly describes a main difference between journals and diaries. Because they are less private and more likely to be shared with others, many journals are published as reflections and memoirs of a certain time or experience. Choice **B** is incorrect because it confuses journals and diaries; it is diaries that are more private. Choices **C** and **D** also confuse the two genres; diaries are generally not limited by time or topic, and the writing is casual and personal. Since they are usually for the writer’s own eyes, the writing can be relaxed and informal.

Questions for this part of the standard will also ask you to analyze and evaluate the logic and use of evidence in an author’s argument. As you analyze this evidence, you need to remember the difference between fact and opinion. Nonfiction works such as speeches and essays often combine fact and opinion, particularly if they are meant to be persuasive.

Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion

A fact is a statement that can be proven. An opinion is a statement that cannot be proven because it states a writer’s belief or judgment about something.

Read the two sentences below. Which states a fact, and which states an opinion?

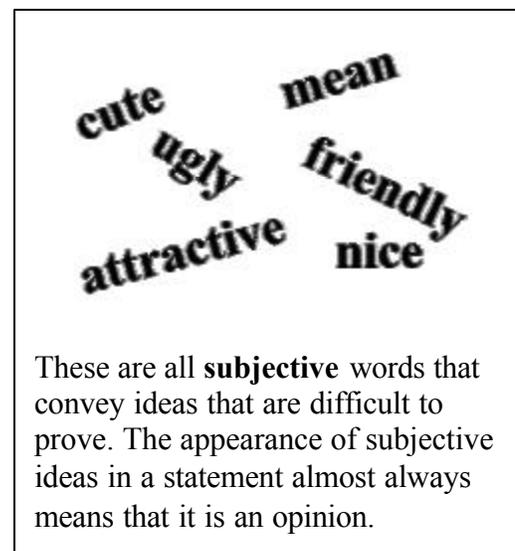
1. For dinner, we had meatloaf, carrots, and green beans.
2. For dinner, we had the most mouth-watering, delicious meal ever.

Sentence 1 is straightforward. The facts could be checked and verified. Sentence 2 is a judgment. It expresses the author’s opinion about the meal. Another dinner guest may not have liked the meal or may have thought it was only average.

Deciding whether or not a statement is a fact or opinion often comes down to a single question: “Can you prove it?” If you can prove a statement somehow, then it is a fact. If not, it’s an opinion. Take a look at the statements below and notice the difference between them.

FACT: Many critics gave the movie a poor review.
OPINION: It was a bad movie.

The opinion in this example uses the word *bad*. How can you prove something is *bad*? Hook it up to a Bad-o-Meter? *Bad* is a **subjective** idea, meaning that every person has his or her own definition of what it means. Subjective ideas cannot be proven.



These are all **subjective** words that convey ideas that are difficult to prove. The appearance of subjective ideas in a statement almost always means that it is an opinion.

Because nonfiction writers use some of the same literary devices that fiction writers employ, you may also be asked questions about language, style, and syntax.

STRATEGY BOX—Take Notes While You Read

Whenever you read an informational passage on the EOCT, stop after each paragraph and ask yourself, “What is the main idea of this paragraph?” After each paragraph, take a moment to jot some notes that summarize what that paragraph was about. Sample notes about an essay titled “Why Homework Is a Good Idea” might look something like this:

- First Paragraph: *importance of education*
- Second Paragraph: *advantages of giving homework*
- Third Paragraph: *talks about how busy students feel they don’t have time for homework*
- Fourth Paragraph: *ways students who have very little time can still get their homework done*
- Fifth Paragraph: *stresses how homework is an important part of education*

Don’t spend too much time trying to come up with the perfect summary of each paragraph. Just use about three to ten words to quickly summarize what each paragraph covers.

POETRY

For the poetry part of this standard, you will have to identify and respond to the literary devices reviewed earlier in this standard. You will also have to answer questions about devices and structures that are more particular to poetry. For example, you will need to know about sound devices that make poetry sound the way it does. You will also need to identify the topic of the poem—what it’s about—and its theme—what statement it makes about life or society. Then you’ll need to identify how the poet creates the topic and the theme.

As you read poetry, you “hear” the writing in your mind. Sound devices make poetry sound better in your mind. These sound devices include the following:

Rhyme. Rhyme is the repetition of sounds, most commonly heard at the ends of lines in poetry, as in “Twinkle, twinkle, little *star* / how I wonder what you *are*.” Rhyme can occur at every line, every other line, or wherever the poet decides. Not all poems rhyme, nor do they have to, but rhyme can emphasize ideas or images and unify thought, as well as add a musical quality to a poem. When you read a poem that has rhyme, look at the rhyming words and see how they contribute to the overall meaning of the poem. Here are some different types of rhyme (see next page):

Type	Definition	Example
End rhyme	Rhymes that occur at the end of a line of poetry; the most common type of rhyme	My dog was bad, Now I am mad.
Internal rhyme	Rhyme occurring within a line of poetry	The first line from Edgar Allen Poe’s poem “The Raven”: “Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,”
Slant rhyme	Also called a near rhyme, half rhyme, or off rhyme. The final consonant sounds are the same but the vowel sounds are different.	parable and shell, green and gone, bone and moon
Consonance	A kind of slant rhyme. Words have the same beginning and ending consonant sounds but a different vowel.	chitter and chatter, spoiled and spilled
Assonance	Not a true rhyme. Uses repetition of similar vowel sounds. May occur in the initial vowel as in alliteration.	All and awful, feet and sweep, lake and fate

Rhyme scheme. The rhyme scheme is the pattern of rhymes in a poem. Each new rhyme in a stanza is represented by a different letter of the alphabet. For example, in a four-line poem in which every other line rhymes, the rhyme scheme is abab. In a six-line poem with every two lines rhyming, the rhyme scheme is aabbcc.

While sound devices and figures of speech are important in poetry, the structure of a poem is often its most distinctive characteristic. Poems are written in stanzas, or lines. These stanzas are in fixed form or free form. **Fixed form** is what most people consider typical poetry: it’s written in traditional verse and generally rhymes. Some fixed form poems have specific requirements on length, rhyme scheme, and number of syllables. A sonnet, for example, is a 14-line rhymed poem. **Free form**, or free verse poetry, follows no specific guidelines about rhyme, meter, or length. Free verse tries to capture the cadence of regular speech. Some stanzas may rhyme but not in a regular scheme. **Blank verse** is a poem written in unrhymed iambic pentameter, a pattern of five iambic feet per line. An iambic foot is one unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable.

The subject matter of poems is also important. Some poems are **narrative** poems. The main purpose of a narrative poem is to tell a story. A **ballad** is a narrative poem, often of folk origin, intended to be sung. It consists of simple stanzas and usually has a refrain. **Lyric** poetry expresses a person’s thoughts or feelings. Elegies, odes, and sonnets are types of lyric poems.

Something about Sonnets

A sonnet is a 14-line poem with a fixed rhyme scheme. There are two main types of sonnets, each with its own distinctive rhyme scheme. A Petrarchan sonnet is divided into an octave (the first eight lines) and a sestet (the next six lines). The rhyme scheme is **abbaabba cdecde**. The rhyme scheme of an English, or Shakespearean sonnet, is **abab cdcd efef gg**. A Shakespearean sonnet is written in iambic pentameter.

The final part of the poetry standard asks you to sort and classify poems according to these forms and structures presented on the previous pages. You will have to answer questions like the following:

Why is this poem considered a lyric?

- A because it expresses the poet's love for Greece
- B because it tells the story of the poet's trip to Greece
- C because of its abab rhyme scheme
- D because it is meant to be sung

Choice **B** describes a narrative poem. Choice **C** describes the rhyme scheme, which identifies the poem as fixed verse but not necessarily a lyric. Choice **D** confuses the meaning of *lyric* with the meaning of *lyrics*. Choice **A** is the correct answer since a lyric poem expresses thoughts and feelings.

Questions for this domain will also test your ability to identify types of figurative language that are often found in poetry, but that can also be found in texts of all genres. You have already familiarized yourself with personification, simile, and metaphor. You should also review the following terms:

Allusion: An implied or indirect reference to a person, place, or thing that is fictitious, historical, or real. For example, if you call a situation a *catch-22*, you are alluding to Joseph Heller's novel *Catch-22*, which describes a problematic situation in which there is no right or easy answer.

Conceit: An elaborate or extended simile or metaphor. Colonial poet Anne Bradstreet used a conceit when she compared her husband to the sun.

Metonymy: A figure of speech where the name of a thing is being substituted for another word or term closely associated with it. For example, we may use the *White House* to refer to the *president*.

Synecdoche: A figure of speech closely related to metonymy. A part is used to represent the whole or vice versa. Examples include using *hands* to refer to *sailors* (all hands on deck), *wheels* to represent *car* (buy some new wheels), or *Central* to refer to *the members of the Central High School basketball team* (Central won the tournament).

Some questions in the poetry portion of this standard will ask you to understand these mechanisms of figurative language in a poem. If you become familiar with these terms and their definitions, you will more easily be able to answer these questions related to works of poetry (see below)

Daffodils
By William Wordsworth

I WANDER'D lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Which feature of William Wordsworth's poem "Daffodils" is an example of conceit?

- A** Daffodils are described as a crowd.
- B** Daffodils are described as happy.
- C** Daffodils are compared to stars.
- D** Daffodils are compared to dancers.

The correct answer is choice **D**. The daffodils are compared to dancers throughout the poem. Wordsworth describes them as "dancing in the breeze" and "tossing their heads in sprightly dance," and describes them as more gleeful than the dancing waves. The other descriptions/comparisons are examples of metaphor (choice **A**), personification (choice

B), and simile (choice **C**) and. The comparison to dancers is an extended metaphor, or conceit.

Questions for this standard may also ask you about the historical development of poetry in American literature. See the standard *Relate literary works to their historical setting or to their contemporary context* beginning on page 30 for the necessary background on influences from American literary periods.

DRAMA

The last part of this standard focuses on drama, or dramatic literature. You will need to identify and analyze types of dramatic literature. The two most common types are tragedies and comedies. A **tragedy** is a serious play that ends in disaster and sorrow. A **comedy** is a lighthearted play intended to amuse the audience. Comedies usually end happily.

As with other literary genres in this standard, you will need to analyze the characters, structures, and themes of dramatic literature. In order to answer these questions, use what you know about these elements in other genres to answer the questions related to dramatic literature.

What's with All the Drama?

Tragedies and comedies are not the only kinds of drama. Here's a short list of the other kinds of drama you'll be expected to recognize.

A **political drama** is a drama or play with a political component, advocating a certain point of view or describing a political event.

Modern drama, like all modern literature, explores themes of alienation and disconnectedness. Modern drama, which became popular in the early 1900s, strives to let the audience feel as if it is peering in on real-life situations and experiencing real-life emotions.

The **theatre of the absurd** refers to plays written in the 1950s and 1960s with the basic belief that human existence is absurd, or without meaning. The play itself often lacks the usual conventions of plot, character, or setting. Edward Albee's *The American Dream* (1960) is considered the first American absurdist drama.

You also need to review terms that are more specific to drama. **Dramatic conventions** are rules in which the actors and audience engage during a play. Some conventions relate to how the audience and the actors interact. For example, the audience knows to become quiet when the lights dim. Another example is the **fourth wall**, the imaginary wall that is supposedly removed to allow the audience to peer into a room to see the drama unfold. **Expressionism** refers to both a type of drama and the way it is portrayed on the stage. This dramatic style exaggerates reality. On the stage, expressionism is known for its use of bright lights, loud sounds, colorful scenery, and expressive dialogue. **Minimalism** is the opposite of expressionism. It relies on sparse scenery and limited dialogue. **Dramatic irony** is a situation in which the audience knows more than the character onstage. A character does or says something of greater importance than he or she knows. The audience, however, is aware of the meaning and importance of the act or speech.

Unlike other literary genres, dramatic literature requires that some direction be given to the characters. These **stage directions** might include how and where to move onstage. Playwrights give directions in relation to the actors and the physical stage. For example, stage left is the actor's left as he or she faces the audience. Playwrights also offer stage directions on how a character should act or how a set should appear. These directions are written in italics and included in brackets in the text of the play. Stage directions might be as detailed as this:

[Unbuttoning his overcoat and stepping away from the stove, he turns to face his son.]

Or the stage directions might be as simple as this:

[The father enters stage left.]

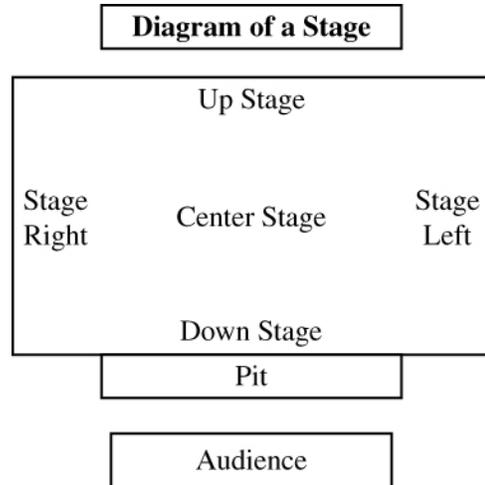
The final part of this standard asks you to identify and analyze how dramatic conventions support and enhance interpretation of dramatic literature. To answer questions in this section, you will need to apply what you have learned about dramatic conventions.

A question for this part of the standard might look like this:

Which situation is an example of dramatic irony?

- A** A character's secret is overheard by someone hiding in the room. The audience can see the eavesdropper, but the character cannot.
- B** A character finishes a task and then says, "Thanks so much for all your help" to someone who has not offered any help.
- C** A play is staged with a three-walled set depicting a living room. The characters are unaware of the audience viewing the action through the missing wall.
- D** A play consists mainly of dialogue, spoken between two characters who sit in chairs upon an empty stage.

The situation described in choice **A** is correct. Dramatic irony occurs when the audience knows something that a character does not know; viewers are "in on a secret" of which the character is unaware. Choice **B** is an example of a different kind of irony: verbal irony, or sarcasm, involves saying one thing and meaning another. Choice **C** is an example of the fourth wall, and choice **D** is an example of minimalism.





Spotlight on the Standards

★ Identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of theme in a work of American literature and provides evidence from the work to support understanding ★

The questions for this standard focus on themes. You will be asked to identify and analyze themes within a text and to evaluate how an author's style or word choice conveys a theme. You might be asked to identify multiple themes in one passage or to compare and contrast the presentation of a universal theme characteristic of American literature across time and genres. In order to answer these questions, you should review what you know about themes.

The **theme** is the central idea of a text. It refers to universal views on life and society that can be discerned from the reading of a text. The theme is not the same as the main idea, which focuses strictly on the content. The theme is also not the same as the plot. Most literary works have one or more themes that are expressed through the plot. To help you identify a work's theme or themes, you might ask yourself: Why did the author have this happen? What point do you think the author was trying to make? What greater significance might this event have?

The following example may help you to understand.

Main Idea: In this novel, the protagonist, Charles, takes his father's car without asking and gets in an accident. He is too ashamed to admit his mistake, so he accuses his younger brother of damaging the car. By the time the truth is finally revealed by a witness to the accident, Charles's father has forgiven his original mistake but his brother will not speak to him.

Theme: The lies we tell to cover up an untruth can often be more damaging than the original untruth.

The main idea in this example tells you what happens in a particular novel. It is a brief summary of the plot that offers some specific detail. The theme, on the other hand, is a more general explanation of what the plot reveals about life.

Because themes offer universal truths about life, you may more easily notice themes that are closely related to events in your life. In the example above, you might relate Joan's situation to a difficult relationship of your own. You don't have to have a personal connection to themes in a work, but if you are having trouble identifying a theme, pay attention to the parts of the story that affect you. A part may contain a theme in hiding.

Still Confused About Themes?

Here are some more points to consider:

- Does the title suggest the theme?
- How does the main character change by the end of the passage?
- Does the change reflect the theme?
- Are there any symbols in the work? (Symbols are often clues to the theme.)

Questions in this standard will also ask you to analyze and compare universal themes characteristic of American literature. These include American individualism, the American dream, cultural diversity, and tolerance, as well as other themes covered in your class.

American individualism is one of the most pervasive themes in American literature. The colonists who first arrived in North America came seeking freedom to practice their individual religion. Others came looking for opportunities that they could not get in closed, class-based societies. Since those early days, Americans have celebrated individual ambition and achievement. The “self-made man” is a common theme in American literature.

American individualism is closely linked to the **American dream**, the idea that anyone in the United States can become whatever he or she wants to become. Generally, the American dream includes achieving a certain level of prosperity through hard work, determination, and perseverance.

Cultural diversity is also a universal theme in American literature. Although there are examples to the contrary, America has always welcomed individuals of diverse backgrounds to the United States. A central metaphor for the United States is that of the melting pot, where different groups of people come together to become Americans. Some people argue that the United States is more like a salad bowl, where each element retains its separate identity while making up part of the whole. Whether you are a melting pot or a salad bowl believer, you cannot deny that American literature reflects this cultural diversity.

Tolerance is another theme found in American literature. Religious tolerance was one of the earliest principles in American life. Much of American literature discusses how well America and its citizens have done in their quest for tolerance.

Questions for this standard might include paired passages. You may be asked to compare and contrast the presentation of universal themes in the paired passages. For example, one passage might be from Ralph Ellison’s novel *Invisible Man*, about an African American’s struggle to regain his identity.

I was looking for myself and asking everyone except myself questions which I, and only I, could answer. It took me a long time and much painful boomeranging of my expectations to achieve a realization that everyone else seems to have been born with: That I am nobody but myself.

Another passage might be an excerpt from Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, a novel about a woman's awakening to her identity.

[Mr. Pontellier] could see plainly that [his wife] was not herself. That is, he could see that she was becoming herself and daily casting aside that fictitious self which we assume like a garment with which to appear before the world.

A question related to both passages might look like this:

Which universal theme of American literature is MOST apparent in both passages?

- A individualism
- B American dream
- C cultural diversity
- D equality

Both passages discuss the main characters' search for meaning and identity in their lives. They want to create their own lives outside of society's norms. Choice **A** is correct because both passages focus on the character's quest for individualism. Choice **B** is incorrect because neither character is particularly focused on the economic prosperity often associated with the American dream. Both works certainly reflect the cultural diversity of America, but that diversity is not what motivates the characters. Therefore, choice **C** is incorrect. Choice **D** is incorrect for similar reasons. Remember that you must always choose the BEST answer, not just a good one.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ *Relate literary works to their historical setting or to their contemporary context* ★

A **literary period** is an artistic attitude of shared characteristics. These characteristics may include the style of writing, the genre, or the subject matter. The work of a certain literary period may be a response to historical events, but it is not the same as the historical period.

This standard tests your knowledge of literary movements and time periods in American literature and the ways in which literary works reflect the principles of these movements. Just as people grow and change, American literature has grown and changed a great deal over the centuries. A literary work from a specific time period usually reflects certain characteristics, depending on historical events, philosophical influences, and human interaction. Questions for this standard may ask you to identify the literary time period to which a work belongs or to identify an aspect of the work that is characteristic of a particular movement.

The information that follows provides a brief summary of the major movements and periods in American Literature.

Native American Period, pre-1620–1840. Native American literature is an oral tradition of song and stories. Any written literature is an account of these songs and stories. Much of Native American literature focuses on the natural world and the sacred world and the importance of land and place. The dates for this period refer to the period of Native American dominance in the New World.

Colonial Period, 1620–1750. During this period, the newly arrived colonists were creating villages and towns and establishing new governments, while protesting the old regime of the British. Literature of this period reflects the religious influence of the Puritans. Famous writers include William Bradford, who writes about the establishment of the new colony; Anne Bradstreet, whose poetry focuses on daily life and family relationships; and Jonathan Edwards, a Puritan minister whose writing reflects the moral attitudes of the time.

Revolutionary Period and Nationalism, 1750–1815. During this period, American writers focused on explaining and justifying the Revolution. Political writings by Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson belong to this time period. With the Revolution behind them, Americans found time to ponder what it really meant to be American. An even greater focus on nationalism, patriotism, and American identity arose following the War of 1812, which removed the last British troops from North America.

Romanticism and Transcendentalism, 1800–1855. Romanticism was a philosophical attitude that developed in reaction to previous decades in which reason and rational thought dominated. Writers celebrated individualism, nature, imagination, creativity, and emotions. As Americans expanded westward, the rebellious spirit of Romanticism guided them, and as Eastern cities such as Boston and New York became centers of intellectual thought and culture, the romantic ideal inspired them to ask questions and pursue lively philosophical debates. The philosophy of Transcendentalism, exemplified by Ralph Waldo Emerson, eventually evolved; it stressed respect for the individual and the intuitive pursuit of a greater truth. Writers from this period include Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Walt Whitman, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau.

Realism, 1850–1900. This period, which includes the Civil War, significant industrial invention, and extensive westward expansion, is one of the most turbulent and creative in American history. Hinting at the modern movement yet to come, writers turned to realism in an effort to articulate the tensions and complex events of the time. Authors made it their mission to convey the reality of life, harsh as it might seem. Characters reflected real people, determined yet flawed, struggling to overcome the difficulties of war, family, natural disasters, and human weaknesses. Some authors, such as Mark Twain, focused on a particular region of the country, seeking to represent accurately the culture and beliefs by presenting its **local color**. This literature emphasized accurate portrayals of the physical landscape as well as the habits and the speech of the area’s people. Other writers of this period include Ambrose Bierce, Stephen Crane, Willa Cather, and Emily Dickinson.

Naturalism, 1880–1940. This period, which overlaps with Realism, was an extension of realism. Writers during this period focused on grim reality, observing characters much as scientists might observe animals. They sought to discover the natural laws that govern human lives. Unlike the Transcendentalists, Naturalists viewed nature as indifferent, not noble. The characters in these works were often helpless victims of nature, the environment, and their own heritage. Writers of this period include Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, Jack London, and James T. Farrell.

Modern Period, 1900–1950. Wars, economic prosperity, along with the Depression, commercialism, and increased population, marked the first half of the Twentieth Century in the United States. The independent, individualistic spirit that was distinctively American seemed threatened. Writers such as Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and T. S. Eliot explored themes of alienation and change and confronted people’s fears and disillusionments. During this time, African-American literature flourished, inspired by writers such as Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston of the **Harlem Renaissance**. Characteristics of modern literature include extensive use of symbolism, irony, and understatement. Writers experimented with new techniques, such as **stream of consciousness**, in which the random, seemingly unconnected thoughts of a character are revealed. Readers must often use a good deal of inference to understand character and theme, as meaning is suggested more than directly stated.

Postmodern Period, 1950–present. This period includes unprecedented prosperity, the Civil Rights Movement, the Women’s Rights Movement, the end of the Cold War, and the transformation of the world order. Writers of this period have embraced this dismantling of the old reality. Postmodernists blur reality and create nontraditional works without traditional structure or narrative. Its writings are often critical and ironic, concentrating on surface realities and the absurdity of daily life. Distinctions between high and low culture are also distorted. This period has also addressed social issues related to gender and race. Beat poets like Jack Kerouac, William S. Burroughs, and Allen Ginsberg are Postmodernists. Other writers of this period include Norman Mailer, J. D. Salinger, Kurt Vonnegut, and Joyce Carol Oates.

The chart below gives an overview of the important movements and periods in American literature. Study the **approximate** dates and characteristics of each so that you are able to classify a work of literature based on its style and content.

Literary Movement	Time Period	Characteristics of the Movement	Representative Authors and Their Works
Native American Period	Pre-1620–1840	Celebrates the natural and spiritual worlds	Oral tradition; original authors and works are largely unknown.
Colonial Period	1620–1750	Focuses on historical events, daily life, moral attitudes (Puritanism), political unrest	William Bradford (<i>Of Plymouth Plantation</i>), Anne Bradstreet (“To My Dear and Loving Husband,” “The Author to Her Book”), Jonathan Edwards (<i>Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God</i>), Benjamin Franklin (<i>Poor Richard’s Almanack</i>)
Revolutionary Period and Nationalism	1750–1815	Celebrates nationalism and patriotism and examines what it means to be “American”	Political writings by Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson
Romanticism and Transcendentalism	1800–1855	Celebrates individualism, nature, imagination, emotions	Washington Irving (“Legend of Sleepy Hollow”), Nathaniel Hawthorne (<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>), Herman Melville (<i>Moby Dick</i>), Walt Whitman (<i>Leaves of Grass</i>), Ralph Waldo Emerson (“Self-Reliance”), Henry David Thoreau (<i>Walden</i>)

Literary Movement	Time Period	Characteristics of the Movement	Representative Authors and Their Works
Realism	1850–1900	Examines realities of life, human frailty; regional culture (local color)	Stephen Crane (<i>The Red Badge of Courage</i>), Willa Cather (<i>O Pioneers</i>), Emily Dickinson (“Because I Could Not Stop for Death”), Mark Twain (<i>Huckleberry Finn</i>)
Naturalism	1880–1940	Views life as a set of natural laws to be discovered	Theodore Dreiser (<i>Sister Carrie</i>), James T. Farrell (<i>Studs Lonigan: A Trilogy</i>), Jack London (<i>The Sea-Wolf</i>), Frank Norris (<i>The Octopus</i>)
Modern Period	1900–1950	Themes of alienation, disconnectedness; experiments with new techniques; use of irony and understatement	T. S. Eliot (<i>The Waste Land</i>), F. Scott Fitzgerald (<i>The Great Gatsby</i>), Ernest Hemingway (<i>For Whom the Bell Tolls</i>), Langston Hughes (“Theme for English B”), Zora Neale Hurston (<i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>)
Postmodern Period	1950–present	Nontraditional topics and structures; embrace of changing reality	Norman Mailer (<i>The Armies of the Night</i>), Joyce Carol Oates (<i>Bellefleur</i>), J.D. Salinger (<i>Catcher in the Rye</i>), Kurt Vonnegut (<i>Breakfast of Champions</i>)

Questions may ask you to identify the time period during which a work was written or to identify characteristics that illustrate why a work belongs to a particular time period. Questions for this standard may include paired passages. You might see questions like these:

Which detail from the passage informs the reader of the time period?

The poem is characteristic of which period in American Literature?

Which characteristics of the Modern Period are found in both the story and the poem?

Question #4 (page 48) for the sample passage “To Build a Fire” (pages 43–44) provides a detailed example of this type of question.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Identify important ideas and locate support for those concepts within the text ★

Questions in this standard ask you to identify important ideas and locate support for these concepts within the text. You will be asked to identify how an author’s style, choice of words, and use of imagery contribute to a theme or underlying meaning. You will need to be able to identify these style devices. For example, every literary work has tone, an overall sense of the author’s attitude toward the subject matter. Some works have a very strong tone, and others may have a more neutral tone, but even a neutral tone suggests something important about the author’s feelings. A work’s tone may be described by any number of adjectives—sympathetic, sarcastic, playful, defiant, awed, nostalgic, ironic, somber—depending on the author’s choice of words and details.

Here are two versions of the same scene. The words and details used suggest a completely different tone for each.

The woman trudged through the heavy snow, struggling against the wind, her face shielded by a thick gray scarf. She kept her face down, her eyelids nearly closed, dark slits in a pale white face. Her shoulders sagged as if laden with a heavy burden, yet her arms were empty.

The woman danced across the snow, her feet barely leaving prints, her arms lifted upward, embracing the wind. She flung back her head and tossed her red hat into the air, lifting her face into the driving snow and allowing the snowflakes to caress her skin.

What is the tone of the first scene? Look at the words the author uses and the details he chooses to include. Words like *trudged*, *sagged*, and *laden* suggest heaviness; the colors—white snow, gray scarf, pale white face—are monochromatic and drab.

Therefore, you might describe the tone of the first scene as somber or hopeless. In the second scene, the woman dances across the snow so lightly that her feet do not seem to leave any marks in it. She welcomes both the wind and the snow. A splash of color—the red hat—brightens the scene. You might say that the tone of the second scene is joyful and hopeful.

Questions about tone might ask you to identify the overall tone of a story, the tone in a section of the story, or how the author establishes the tone.

A question for this standard may look like this:

Read the passage below.

from *Little Women*
by Louise May Alcott

Laurie lay luxuriously swinging to and fro in his hammock one warm September afternoon, wondering what his neighbours were about, but too lazy to go and find out. He was in one of his moods; for the day had been both unprofitable and unsatisfactory, and he was wishing he could live it over again. The hot weather made him indolent, and he had shirked his studies, tried Mr. Brooke's patience to the utmost, displeased his grandfather by practising half the afternoon, frightened the maid-servants half out of their wits by mischievously hinting that one of his dogs was going mad, and, after high words with the stableman about some fancied neglect of his horse, he had flung himself into his hammock, to fume over the stupidity of the world in general.

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Which line best illustrates the passage's gloomy tone?

- A "Laurie lay luxuriously swinging to and fro"
- B "the day had been both unprofitable and unsatisfactory"
- C "he had ... frightened the maid-servants half out of their wits by mischievously hinting that one of his dogs was going mad"
- D "he had flung himself into his hammock, to fume over the stupidity of the world in general"

The tone of the passage is gloomy, but the line that BEST illustrates this is choice **D**. Laurie's action ("flung himself") and thoughts ("fume over the stupidity") show the grumpiness and negativity that run throughout the passage and contribute to its gloomy tone. Choices **A–C** all suggest a feeling of discontent, but choice **D** is the best answer because it most thoroughly and vividly reflects the overall tone.

Other questions in this standard may ask you to make comparisons between a writer's beliefs and literary works. For example, Henry David Thoreau was an active environmentalist. He believed that people should simplify their lives and learn to live in harmony with nature. *Walden* is Thoreau's document of his attempt to "simplify, simplify, simplify." The connection between the writer's work and his beliefs or generalizations about life is clear. Other books may not have such a clear connection, but if you analyze a work closely and determine the author's point of view, you should be able to answer questions for this standard. A review of major American authors and their works would also help you to answer questions in this standard.

STRATEGY BOX—Answer the Question First

As you are answering questions on the EOCT, you should always try to answer the question **BEFORE** you read the answer choices. Once you have decided what the answer is, you should look at the choices. Are there any choices close to your answer? That is probably the correct answer. Looking at the answer choices first, before you have a clear idea of the correct answer, may confuse you. Some of the answer choices will be close to the correct answer, and if you are unsure of the correct answer, you may choose the close, but wrong, answer.

To see how this strategy works, read the following question:

Read the words from the passage in the box below.

I kept as still as I could. Nothing happened. I did not expect anything to happen. I was something that lay under the sun and felt it, like the pumpkins, and I did not want to be anything more. I was entirely happy.

from *My Antonia* by Willa Cather

What do the words suggest?

Based on the passage, you might answer “outdoor contentment and relaxation.” Turning to the answer choices, you’ll find:

- A** The narrator enjoys fall weather.
- B** The narrator is at peace with nature.
- C** The narrator loves gardens.
- D** The narrator is tired from traveling.

Because you have already answered the question with “outdoor contentment and relaxation,” you can quickly identify **B** as the correct answer.

For this standard, you will also be asked questions on formal works cited and bibliographies. You should know whether it is necessary to include a **bibliography** or a list of **works cited** with a piece of writing. If the ideas you are writing about or the words you are writing are not your own, you need to acknowledge where those words and ideas originated by including a bibliographic **citation**. Citations give credit to the author of the original idea and help readers find more information.

For example, you might be asked to decide if a bibliography is required:

Which student paper would most likely include a bibliography?

- A a story for a creative writing class
- B a letter to the school newspaper
- C a research paper about cloning
- D an essay about a personal experience

The correct choice is **C**. For a research paper, you will need to read from other sources and include references to those sources in your paper. Personal letters and essays do not usually require bibliographies, and a creative story (fiction) will consist of your own words and ideas.

Although they both cite outside sources, there is a difference between a bibliography and a list of works cited. For more information about when to use each one, see the section “Documenting Your Sources” on page 68 in Content Domain III.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ *Understand and acquire new vocabulary and use it correctly* ★

Questions for this standard will ask you to understand and acquire new vocabulary words that are appropriate for high school students. You will be asked to use your knowledge of mythology, the Bible, and various works of American and British literature to determine the meanings of new words. Items will also test your ability to use dictionaries, thesauruses, and encyclopedias.

To demonstrate your knowledge of vocabulary, you will need to be familiar with certain terms. **Idioms** are phrases or expressions that are peculiar to a particular language. The meaning of the idiom does not correspond to the literal meaning of the words. For example, if you look like the cat who swallowed the canary, have you really become a cat or swallowed a canary? Instead, you are satisfied with something that happened or have experienced a great success.

Cognates are words that have the same origin or are related in some way to words in other languages. You can use your knowledge of other languages to help you understand the meanings of certain words. Examples of cognates are *night* (English), *noche* (Spanish), *notte* (Italian), and *nuit* (French). All are derived from an Indo-European language.

Like idioms, **figurative language** is understood by not simply defining the words in the phrase. You will need to distinguish between literal and figurative meanings of words and phrases. (Literal refers to the “primary meaning of a word or phrase.”) For example, if

someone tells you to open the door, you can be fairly confident that you are, in fact, to open a physical portal. If someone tells you to “open the door to your heart,” you are not expected to find a door in your chest. Instead, you are to open up your feelings and emotions.

Two other useful vocabulary terms are denotation and connotation. The dictionary definition of a word is its **denotation**. The **connotation** of a word is a meaning or idea associated with the word.

For example, both *laugh* and *giggle* have a similar denotation. These words refer to sounds you make when you find something funny. However, the word *giggle* has youthful connotations associated with it. You often think of children giggling, but rarely think of grandfathers giggling. The word *laugh* has no such connotations associated with it. Therefore, while the denotation of both words is the same, the connotations are different. If a writer decides to describe a grandfather giggling, she probably means to hint that he has a youthful spirit or is feeling particularly young at heart.

Another consideration when trying to identify word meanings is the pattern of word changes that indicate different meanings or functions. For example, adding an *-er* to many verbs makes them nouns. *Dance* becomes *dancer*; *listen* becomes *listener*. Adding *-ly* to some adjectives can make them adverbs. Some adjectives become new nouns when *-ness* is added to the end. *Happy* becomes *happiness*, for example. Knowing words in one form will help you determine their meaning when they appear in other forms.

The English language was not created from scratch. It consists of borrowed words and word parts from many different languages. In particular, many words are formed from combinations of Greek or Latin prefixes, suffixes, and word roots. You can use your knowledge of these word parts to help you determine the meaning of a word. To answer questions for this standard, you will also have to use your knowledge of mythology, the Bible, and other works of literature to help define new words. A question may look something like this:

Which word is derived from the Greek name for the god of war?

- A martial
- B panic
- C titanic
- D volcano

From your review of Greek mythology in the first standard of this domain, you know that Mars is the Greek god of war. Therefore, choice **A** is correct. *Martial* means relating to war. The remaining answer choices are also derived from Greek mythology.

Can you name the god or gods for choices **B**, **C**, and **D**?

Answers: **B**. Pan **C**. Titans **D**. Vulcan.

STRATEGY BOX—Analyze the Word by Its Parts

Look for familiar prefixes, suffixes, and word roots when faced with an unknown word. Knowing the meaning of these word parts will help you determine the meaning of the unknown word.

Here are some other examples of words based on Greek mythology.

Narcissus	narcissism
Mercury	mercurial
Echo	echo
Ceres	cereal

Questions for this standard will also test your ability to use reference materials. Which reference book would you consult to find a definition for the above vocabulary terms? As you know, a **dictionary** is your best source for the definition and spelling of words. You can also discover a word's origin or etymology in a dictionary.

Which reference source would you use to learn about the Greek myth behind the term? To get more detailed information on subject areas, you can look in an **encyclopedia**.

If you need help with diction or just don't want to keep using the same word over and over, you should turn to a **thesaurus** to find synonyms and related words.

Study Ideas for Content Domain I

The best way for you to prepare for questions assessing Content Domain I is to read a passage thoroughly, think about what you have read, ask yourself the kinds of questions described in this guide for Content Domain I, and then answer them.

First, find a reading passage. Here is a list of possible sources for appropriate reading passages:

- Anthologies of American literature
- Short story collections
- Poetry collections
- Drama collections
- Works by prominent American authors (your English teacher or librarian can give you suggestions)
- Biographies on American authors
- Informational articles about the literary movements or important literary works

After you read the passage, ask yourself these questions:

- What is this passage about?
- What literary period does the passage represent?
- What are its themes?
- How does the author use imagery or symbolism?
- How does the author use language to achieve a desired effect?
- Are there any words I do not know? If so, can I use the words' structure to determine their meanings? How does the dictionary define the words?
- (For fictional literary passages) What is the structure of the novel? To which literary genre does this work belong?
- (For nonfiction) What is the purpose of this work? How is the passage structured? What evidence does the author use to support the viewpoint of the passage?
- (For poetry) What is this poem about? What types of sound devices does the poet use? How is the poem structured? Of which period in American literature is this poem characteristic?
- (For drama) What type of dramatic literature is the passage? What are the play's themes? What types of dramatic conventions does the playwright use?

Find more passages and repeat this process as many times as possible. Be sure to find both literary and informational passages. The more you practice reading passages, asking questions and answering them, the better you should do on the EOCT.

Sample Questions for Content Domain I

This section has some sample questions for you to try. Before you answer them, take a few minutes to learn about some strategies that you can use to help you do your best on a reading test.

STRATEGIES FOR ANSWERING READING QUESTIONS

1. Review the test questions before reading the passage. Reading the test questions (just the questions, not the answer choices) before reading the passage can help you focus on what you are trying to find in the passage to answer the questions. Next, read the passage. You can make notes in the test booklet as you read. When you think you have found some information that will help answer a question, make a note. Do not stop reading the passage to answer a question. After you have read the entire passage, you can go back to look at your notes and answer the questions.

2. Summarize the passage. Next to each paragraph, write a brief note indicating what the paragraph is about. Use your notes like a road map to help you find the information you need to answer the questions.

Be sure to keep an eye on the time. Do not spend so much time taking notes on a passage that you do not have time to answer the questions.

3. Read ALL of the answer choices. Look at each answer choice carefully. Before marking an answer, think to yourself: Is it the BEST choice? Where can I find this in the passage? What in the passage makes me think this is correct? Do not just mark the first answer choice that looks good.

Read the following poem and answer the questions that follow.

From The Shore

By Carl Sandburg

A lone gray bird,
Dim-dipping, far-flying,
Alone in the shadows and grandeurs and tumults
Of night and the sea
5 And the stars and storms.

Out over the darkness it wavers and hovers,
Out into the gloom it swings and batters,
Out into the wind and the rain and the vast,
Out into the pit of a great black world,
10 Where fogs are at battle, sky-driven, sea-blown,
Love of mist and rapture of flight,
Glories of chance and hazards of death
On its eager and palpitant wings.

Out into the deep of the great dark world,
15 Beyond the long borders where foam and drift
Of the sundering waves are lost and gone
On the tides that plunge and rear and crumble.

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1 The author sets and maintains a tone that can BEST be described as

- A enthusiastic
- B distrustful
- C lighthearted
- D ominous

Answer: **D** Standard: *Identify important ideas and locate support for those ideas within the text*

Choice **A** implies that the speaker is excited and encouraging; there is no evidence of this in the poem. There is also no evidence for choice **B**, “distrustful.” Choice **C** is incorrect, although lines 11–12 might mislead you. To answer questions about tone, however, you must take into account the entire poem. Words like “tumults,” “storms,” “gloom,” and “great dark world” throughout the poem support choice **D** as the best answer.

2 The line “Dim-dipping, far-flying” uses what literary technique?

- A irony
- B symbolism
- C alliteration
- D personification

Answer: **C** Standard: *Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structures and elements of American fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama*

You must know literary terms to choose the correct answer to this question. Irony, symbolism, and personification are all incorrect answers. Since alliteration is the repetition of initial consonant sounds, choice **C** is correct.

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

To Build a Fire
By Jack London

- 1 For land travel or seafaring, the world over, a companion is usually considered desirable. In the Klondike, as Tom Vincent found out, such a companion is absolutely essential. But he found it out, not by precept, but through bitter experience.
- 2 “Never travel alone,” is a precept of the north. He had heard it many times and laughed; for he was a strapping young fellow, big-boned and big-muscled, with faith in himself and in the strength of his head and hands.
- 3 It was on a bleak January day when the experience came that taught him respect for the frost, and for the wisdom of the men who had battled with it.
- 4 He had left Calumet Camp on the Yukon with a light pack on his back, to go up Paul Creek to the divide between it and Cherry Creek, where his party was prospecting and hunting moose.
- 5 The frost was sixty degrees below zero, and he had thirty miles of lonely trail to cover, but he did not mind. In fact, he enjoyed it, swinging along through the silence, his blood pounding warmly through his veins, and his mind carefree and happy. For he and his comrades were certain they had struck “pay” up there on the Cherry Creek Divide; and, further, he was returning to them from Dawson with cheery home letters from the States.
- 6 At seven o’clock, when he turned the heels of his moccasins toward Calumet Camp, it was still black night. And when day broke at half past nine he had made the four-mile cut-off across the flats and was six miles up Paul Creek. The trail, which had seen little travel, followed the bed of the creek, and there was no possibility of his getting lost. He had gone to Dawson by way of Cherry Creek and Indian River, so Paul Creek was new and strange. By half past eleven he was at the forks, which had been described to him, and he knew he had covered fifteen miles, half the distance.

- 7 He knew that in the nature of things the trail was bound to grow worse from there on, and thought that, considering the good time he had made, he merited lunch. Casting off his pack and taking a seat on a fallen tree, he unmittened his right hand, reached inside his shirt next to the skin, and fished out a couple of biscuits sandwiched with sliced bacon and wrapped in a handkerchief—the only way they could be carried without freezing solid.
- 8 He had barely chewed the first mouthful when his numbing fingers warned him to put his mitten on again. This he did, not without surprise at the bitter swiftness with which the frost bit in. Undoubtedly it was the coldest snap he had ever experienced, he thought.
- 9 He spat upon the snow—a favorite northland trick—and the sharp crackle of the instantly congealed spittle startled him. The spirit thermometer at Calumet had registered sixty below when he left, but he was certain it had grown much colder, how much colder he could not imagine.
- 10 Half of the first biscuit was yet untouched, but he could feel himself beginning to chill—a thing most unusual for him. This would never do, he decided, and slipping the pack-straps across his shoulders, he leaped to his feet and ran briskly up the trail.
- 11 A few minutes of this made him warm again, and he settled down to a steady stride, munching the biscuits as he went along. The moisture that exhaled with his breath crusted his lips and mustache with pendent ice and formed a miniature glacier on his chin. Now and again sensations forsook his nose and checks, and he rubbed them till they burned with the returning blood.
- 12 Most men wore nose-straps; his partners did, but he had scorned such “feminine contraptions,” and till now had never felt the need of them. Now he did feel the need, for he was rubbing constantly.
- 13 Nevertheless he was aware of a thrill of joy, of exultation. He was doing something, achieving something, mastering the elements. Once he laughed aloud in sheer strength of life, and with his clenched fist defied the frost. He was its master. What he did he did in spite of it. It could not stop him. He was going on to the Cherry Creek Divide.
- 14 Strong as were the elements, he was stronger. At such times animals crawled away into their holes and remained in hiding. But he did not hide. He was out in it, facing it, fighting it. He was a man, a master of things.

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3 Which paragraph is the BEST example of *in medias res*?

- A paragraph 2
- B paragraph 3**
- C paragraph 4
- D paragraph 14

Answer: **B** Standard: *Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structures and elements of American fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama*

In order to answer this question, you must know the elements of fiction. *In medias res* means “in the middle of things.” Paragraph 3 starts with a meaningful event that the rest of the passage describes. The correct answer is choice **B**. Choice **A** is incorrect because it introduces the main idea. Choice **C** is incorrect because it begins the narrative portion of the passage. Choice **D** is the conclusion of the passage.

4 Which literary movement is best represented by this passage?

- A romanticism
- B modernism
- C naturalism
- D realism

Answer: **C** Standard: *Relate American literary works to other literary documents or non-literary documents from their historical period or setting*

You must rely on your knowledge of the characteristics of literary genres to answer this question. If you remembered that Jack London was a figure in the naturalist literary movement, you would know that the answer is choice **C**. If you did not remember London specifically, you might remember that naturalists viewed life as harsh and nature as indifferent. It is London’s description of nature that distinguishes this selection from choice **D**. Choices **A** and **B** are incorrect.

5 Which of the following statements does NOT reflect a theme of the passage?

- A Never travel alone.
- B Man is the master of nature.
- C Experience is a good teacher.
- D Frostbite is a serious medical condition.

Answer: **D** Standard: *Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of theme in American literature and provide evidence to support understanding*

To answer this question, you need to identify the themes in this passage. Analyzing the passage is the best way to identify these themes. If you are stuck, however, you should also look at the answer choices. A theme is a universal statement about life. Are there any answer choices that do not make a universal statement? Choices **A**, **B**, and **C** are all themes. Choice **D** is the only choice that is not a theme. Choice **D** is correct.

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

Edith Wharton

- 1 Young writers are often advised to “write what they know,” or, in other words, to allow their writing to mirror their own lives. Well-known literary figure Edith Wharton may have followed this convention when she authored *The House of Mirth*, a novel that many consider to be her first masterpiece. The book, published in 1905, is set in the affluent New York society in which Edith herself had been raised.
- 2 Wharton was born Edith Newbold Jones on January 24, 1862, in New York. The only daughter of Lucretia Stevens Rhinelander and George Frederic Jones, she had two older brothers who were considerably older. Wharton’s grandfather, William Rhinelander, was a multi-millionaire with interests in banking, shipping, and real estate; thus, Wharton and her family were able to live a luxurious life in her early years. But when she was four, economic setbacks caused the family to move to Europe where they could live on less money. For the next six years, they traveled through Germany, France, and Italy.
- 3 While abroad, Wharton learned to read. Through the efforts of her father and several tutors she became multilingual, learning the language of every country in which they lived. It was while they were living in Paris that she began to create stories and her talent began to flourish. By age ten, she had already read all of Shakespeare’s plays and many of the poetry of Keats and Shelley. At eleven she started to write her first novel, and when she was only fifteen, she wrote a novella titled *Fast and Loose*. When she was eighteen, Wharton moved to Italy with her parents, but returned to New York after the death of her father.
- 4 In 1885 when the blossoming writer was 23, she married 35-year-old Edward (“Teddy”) Wharton, a man who was accustomed to a life of leisure. Though Edward was wealthy and enjoyed traveling the world, he was not interested in art or literature. Their marriage was not a solid one. After a time Wharton felt lonely, and she began to write again, perhaps to escape her own reality. She sought to have her work published in the highly regarded magazines of her day and was successful. Her poems and short stories appeared in a number of influential publications, including *Harper’s* and *Scribner’s*.
- 5 Wharton also collaborated with a young architect named Ogden Codman, Jr., on a book called *The Decoration of Houses*, one of the first books about home design to be published in the United States. The book was a rapid success, and Wharton was encouraged to continue writing. She went on to publish *The Greater Inclination*, her first collection of short stories, which received rave reviews and truly established Wharton as an author. Her career as a writer spanned over forty years and included the publication of more than forty books, although she is remembered not only for her respected literature; she was also a compassionate woman who sincerely cared for others. She established hostels and schools and housed more than 700 World War I orphans at her own expense.
- 6 After the war ended in 1920, Wharton published *The Age of Innocence*. The novel was both a popular and a critical success, and in 1921, Edith Wharton was the first female to receive the Pulitzer Prize for fiction. Decades later, in 1993, Martin Scorsese directed a film version of *The Age of Innocence*, allowing modern audiences to appreciate Wharton’s work in a new way.

6 What is the meaning of the word *collaborated* in the sentence, “Wharton also collaborated with a young architect”?

- A composed a work of art
- B worked jointly
- C hired an assistant to help
- D accumulated valuable objects

Answer: **B** Standard: *Understand and acquire new vocabulary and use it correctly*

You can best answer this question by knowing word parts. The prefix *col-* usually means “with” or “together” (as in *collect* or *collate*). The root word *labor* means “work.” This tells you that the word probably means “work together.” Only choice **B** has a definition with this meaning.

7 Which statement from the passage is an opinion?

- A After a time Wharton felt lonely, and she began to write again, perhaps to escape her own reality.
- B Her poems and short stories appeared in a number of influential publications, including *Harper’s* and *Scribner’s*.
- C After the war ended in 1920, Wharton published *The Age of Innocence*.
- D The book was a rapid success, and Wharton was encouraged to continue writing.

Answer: **A** Standard: *Identify important ideas and locate support for those ideas within the text*

Choices **B**, **C**, and **D** all give facts about Edith Wharton’s life. Only **A** states an opinion, keyed by the word “perhaps.” The author is suggesting an opinion as to why Edith Wharton began writing again.

Content Domain II: Reading Across the Curriculum / Listening, Speaking, and Viewing

A Look at Content Domain II



The test questions in this domain ask the student to develop skills and interests and to apply vocabulary specific to a variety of disciplines, genres, and styles. The focus is both academic and personal, through the use of reading, listening, speaking, and viewing skills. Your answers to the questions will help show how well you can perform on the following standards:

- Acquire new vocabulary in each content area and use it correctly
- Establish a context for information acquired by reading across subject areas
- Evaluate the messages and effects of mass media



Spotlight on the Standards

★ ***Acquire new vocabulary in each content area and use it correctly*** ★

Questions for this standard measure your ability to use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words. The tested words are ones that high school students are not likely to know. Short phrases may also be tested under this standard. A question may look something like this:

As it is used in paragraph 4, the word *truncated* most nearly means

- A modified
- B added
- C shortened
- D replaced

Truncated is a difficult word. But you can use context clues to help determine its meaning. The **context** of an unknown word is simply the words that appear before and after it. Understanding the words around an unknown word should help give you clues to its meaning. Look at the words around *truncated* in the sample below:

Everyone could tell it had once been a huge tree. The roots at its base were as large as a grown person. When the tree died, someone had used a chainsaw to cut away most of the tree. All that was left was a ***truncated*** stump of wood. The stump made a picnic table that could seat eight people around it comfortably.

The words around *truncated* should give you a good idea about what it means. There was once a large tree; what happened to it? Most of it was cut down, leaving only a “truncated” stump of wood. What remained could best be described as a shortened, or truncated, piece of wood. Therefore, choice C is the right answer for the question.

STRATEGY BOX—Use the Words Around It

When you are faced with an unknown word, go back to the passage. Start reading two sentences before the word appears, and continue reading for two sentences afterwards. If that does not give you enough clues, look elsewhere in the passage. By reading the context in which the word appears, you may be able to make an educated guess.

How a word is used in a sentence can also determine its meaning. If the context of the word changes, the meaning of the word can also change. This change can be very basic, such as a word being used as a noun in one sentence and a verb in the next.

Set as a noun: That is a lovely *set* of dinner plates.

Set as a verb: Please *set* the books down on the table.

However, a change in meaning can be subtle. Look at the word *shrieked* in the next two sentences, and notice how the meaning of the word changes slightly.

Sentence 1: “There’s a monster in the house!” the woman *shrieked*.

Sentence 2: “I just won 65 million dollars!” the woman *shrieked*.

In the first sentence, the woman shrieks out of fear. In the second sentence, the shriek is one of extreme excitement and happiness. The context of the sentence has determined whether the *shriek* is good or bad.



Spotlight on the Standards

**★ Establish a context for information acquired
by reading across subject areas★**

Items written for this standard will ask you to relate common human experiences to a given text. You will also be tested on your understanding that certain words and concepts can be used in many different mediums and subject areas. In addition, questions will test strategies you have developed to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and concepts.

For this standard, you will be asked to explore how life experiences can help you or other readers relate to the content. You might be asked a question such as this:

Which life experience would MOST improve a reader's ability to identify with the main character in the passage?

- A discrimination
- B misfortune
- C failure
- D disappointment

The sample passage associated with this question might be an excerpt from Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street*, which describes the coming of age of Esperanza, a young Hispanic girl trying to find her place in the Chicago neighborhood in which she lives. The passage might describe the incident when Esperanza tries to eat in the same eatery as the children who go to her school but who don't live in her poor neighborhood. She discovers that she is not welcomed there and this makes her feel ashamed. A reader need not be a young Hispanic girl growing up in the barrios of Chicago to identify with Esperanza's feelings of hurt. A reader who has experienced any sort of discrimination could identify with the character in this story. Choice A is correct. It is the life experience most closely related to this excerpt.

STRATEGY BOX—Empathize

Good readers usually try to understand the characters better by **empathizing**, or identifying with their thoughts and feelings. Empathizing with the characters helps stories come alive and it gives readers more insight into what motivates the characters and how they influence each other.

Context is also helpful in identifying the meaning of words that are being used in different subjects. For example, in science class the word *revolution* refers to a planet’s complete turn around the Sun. In social studies class, a revolution is a complete upheaval in government or society. The context of the passage will help you decide which meaning is appropriate in the passage. What other words do you know whose meanings differ significantly based on the context? Making a list will help you review for this standard.

Sometimes there are no clues in the passage to help you determine the meaning of a word so you have to make an educated guess. The strategy *Plug It In* may help you “hear” the right answer.

STRATEGY BOX—Plug It In

To answer questions for this standard, look at the answer choices. Does one seem the most likely? Try “plugging” it into the sentence to replace the word in the question. Does the word from the answer choice make sense in the sentence? If so, it is probably the correct answer. If not, try plugging in another answer choice.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Evaluate the messages and effects of mass media ★

Whether you realize it or not, you do a lot of reading every day. Much of the reading material you are exposed to is in the form of advertisements of one kind or another. There are billboards, concert posters, political signs, and even bumper stickers. Advertising also appears during television shows and radio broadcasts, in newspapers and magazines, and on Web sites.

What Is Mass Media?

Radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and Web sites are all different channels through which Americans can receive information. Since some or all of these “media” are available to the majority of Americans every day, a large “mass” of people use them as their source for information. Taken together, all these different modes of communication—television, radio, newsprint, etc.—are often referred to as *mass media*.



Almost always, the message of all this advertising is “buy this product!” or something very close to this idea. To get you to “Buy this product,” advertising employs a wide variety of persuasive techniques. Some ads contain statements from famous or popular people claiming that Product X is the only product they would use. Other ads might try to convince you to see a certain movie simply because it is the “number one film in the country.” The idea here is that since everybody else is seeing it, it must be good. Questions for this standard will often test your ability to read a piece of advertising or other mass media message and determine how it is trying to influence you.

Assessing Mass Media

Just as you evaluated written passages in Domain I, you are asked here to assess the effectiveness of mass media. But how do you evaluate these sources? In much the same way you evaluated literary passages. You will look for evidence that a movie, Web site, or advertisement made its point. As you watch a movie or a television program or read a Web site, ask yourself the following questions:

- √ Is the style right for the message?
- √ Am I getting all the information I need, or am I confused about the message?
- √ Is the presentation clear and appropriate for the audience?

You should also pay attention to how an advertisement, film, or Web site looks. Part of its effectiveness depends on how the visual aspects appeal to you. You are told not to judge a book by its cover, but it is okay to judge a Web site by the layout of its home page. It’s okay to judge an advertisement on how the background behind the new CD increases your desire to buy it.

Just as you evaluated the diction and tone of the literary passages in Domain I, you should evaluate the word choices and tone used in media presentations. Is the formal level of speech in that news broadcast appropriate? Should a more informal tone be used in taped interviews?

Because the EOCT is a written test, you will not be asked to watch or listen to media broadcasts. You will be given written passages such as advertisements, newspaper articles, and pages from Web sites.

Common Modes of Rhetoric

1. Narration. Narrative writing tells a story. This story can be true (like a firsthand account in a magazine article) or completely made up (a short story with talking dragons). Narrative writing usually has a story with a plot, a climax, and a resolution of events in the story.

2. Description. As its name suggests, descriptive writing uses language to describe a person, place, or thing. Descriptive writing is often filled with colorful, precise language,

since the goal of good descriptive writing is to make a person, place, or thing come alive in the mind of a reader. A character sketch—a picture of a person captured in words—is one example of descriptive writing.

3. Persuasion. Persuasive writing is designed to influence the reader’s thoughts in some way. Politicians use persuasive speeches to convince voters to cast their ballots for them. Editorials in local newspapers are written to convince readers that one particular viewpoint is better than the other.

4. Exposition. Expository writing is used to provide information on a topic or to explain something. A common encyclopedia entry is a good example of expository writing.

Good writers combine elements of different modes of writing in their work, regardless of its main focus. For example, expository writers often include descriptive writing to enhance the appeal of their encyclopedia article. Editorials will include exposition to support the writer’s position. Gifted politicians often use a narrative style in their speeches to persuade people to vote for them. You will be asked to identify these different elements.

You should also review certain persuasive techniques used in the mass media. These include the **bandwagon** technique, which appeals to people’s desire to fit in and be part of the group. The basic premise is you’re either with us or against us! **Card stacking** refers to the persuasive technique of only presenting information that supports an idea. Negative or contradictory information is not presented. **Stereotyping** creates a simplified picture of a complex situation, individual, or group. Most advertisers and writers today use stereotyping sparingly because of the negatives associated with it. Writers might also use **rhetorical questions**, or questions to which no answer is needed, to try to force readers to agree with them.

To prepare for questions on this standard, you should analyze the mass media you encounter every day and see if you can identify the type of persuasion being used.

Questions for this part of the standard may look like this:

Read the following description of an advertising campaign.

Arguably the most famous of Dr Pepper’s advertising campaigns was their “Be a Pepper” series. These commercials referred to fans of Dr Pepper as “Peppers” and often featured crowd dance scenes with elaborate, over-the-top choreography. One popular ad jingle was:

*I’m a Pepper, he’s a Pepper,
She’s a Pepper, we’re a Pepper,
Wouldn’t you like to be a Pepper, too?
Be a Pepper ~ Drink Dr Pepper*

The strongest evidence of the bandwagon technique in this advertising campaign is that

- A** it encourages people to become part of an “in” crowd.
- B** it asks a question that has no certain answer.
- C** it includes a catchy song.
- D** it appeals to the senses.

The correct answer is choice **A**. This ad campaign is a very literal example of the bandwagon technique. The ad suggests that by drinking Dr Pepper you will become part of a special group; you will “be a Pepper.”

Learning the proper names and definitions of major rhetorical styles—narration, description, persuasion, and exposition—is also necessary to answer questions for this standard.

Study Ideas for Content Domain II

The easiest way to prepare for questions for this content domain is to read, watch television, and surf the Internet. Can you think of a better way to study for a test? This is not just fun and games, though. Remember that you need to read, watch, and surf with a critical eye.

As you read anything—magazines, cereal boxes, greeting cards, textbooks, or bumper stickers—make a mental note of any unfamiliar word. Can you figure out its meaning by the context? Have you encountered this word in a different context? As you watch commercials and read ads, try to determine the intended audience (e.g., children, teenagers, adults, women, men), and what approach is used (e.g., if you use this product you will be popular; a famous athlete likes this product, so you will too). As you watch television news or news magazines, listen to the tone and style of the presenters. Do the anchors adjust their speech to fit the topic? As you read Web sites, try to figure out their purpose. Why did the Web site author use that particular format? Paying attention as you do things that you enjoy may help you do well on the EOCT.

Sample Questions for Content Domain II

This section has some sample questions for you to try. After you have answered each question, the correct answer will be provided as well as an explanation as to why the other answer choices are incorrect.

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

Rachel Carson

- 1 Have you ever found a way to combine two of your interests? Rachel Carson did. As a young child, Carson loved to write, although she did not plan to become a novelist or a poet. As a college student, she discovered a second interest when she took a class in biology that opened her eyes to the beauty of the natural world. Combining these two interests, she wrote about nature in articles and books. Her book *Silent Spring* (1962) brought worldwide attention to the dangers of environmental pollution.
- 2 An astute observer of the natural world, Carson helped readers become more aware of the environment. She died before she saw the fruition of her work. *Silent Spring* helped to foster an international movement of environmental awareness. Carson must have known, however, what kind of influence her book would have. After reading *Silent Spring*, how could anyone turn a blind eye to the damage pesticides and other chemicals were doing to the environment?

1 In paragraph 2, what does the word *fruition* mean?

- A the state of bearing fruit
- B a feeling of enjoyment
- C conclusion
- D backlash

Answer: **C** Standard: *Acquire new vocabulary in each content area and use it correctly*

Choices **A** and **B** are definitions of fruition, but they are incorrect because of the context provided. Choice **D** is incorrect. A backlash may have occurred against Carson's work, but it was not the initial response. Choice **C** correctly defines *fruition* in this context. Carson never lived to see the conclusion of her work.

2 The last sentence in the passage uses which persuasive technique?

- A bandwagon
- B card stacking
- C rhetorical question
- D stereotyping

Answer: C Standard: *Evaluate the messages and effects of mass media*

The correct answer is choice C. The author uses a rhetorical question to draw people to support her conclusion. The rhetorical question creates an us versus them mentality, but choice A is incorrect because it is not the best answer. Choices B and D are not used in this passage.

3 Which word or phrase from the passage also means ignore?

- A opened her eyes
- B astute
- C foster
- D turn a blind eye

Answer: D Standard: *Establish a context for information acquired by reading across subject areas*

Choice D is correct. The phrase *to turn a blind eye* has come to mean *to willfully ignore*. According to some sources, British admiral Horatio Nelson is responsible for the phrase. He put a telescope up to his blind eye in order to ignore the order of a superior officer while in the heat of battle. You may have learned of this incident in readings for your history classes.

4 This brief biography of Carson appears on a Web site advocating greater personal involvement in environmental issues. Which addition would MOST improve the effectiveness of the Web site?

- A a photograph of Carson
- B excerpts from *Silent Spring*
- C links to local environmental projects
- D a list of the most common pesticides

Answer: C Standard: *Evaluate the messages and effects of mass media*

The key to answering this question is to determine the purpose of the Web site. Choice A is incorrect, because a photograph would not encourage people to get involved. Choices B and D might be effective, because educating people is often a way to get them more involved in an issue. Choice C is correct, because giving people direct access to local projects is the best way to support the purpose of the Web site.

Content Domain III: Writing



A Look at Content Domain III

Test questions in this domain will measure your ability to recognize coherent and focused writing. Your answers to the questions will help show how well you can perform on the following standards:

- Organize a writing sample
- Demonstrate ability to convey information and ideas from primary and secondary sources
- Use research and technology to support writing
- Use the writing process to develop, revise, and evaluate writing

Learning to become a good writer takes time and practice. Writing is a complex process that involves many different elements. Understanding these elements can help you become a better writer. This is the purpose of Content Domain III. While it cannot cover every aspect of writing, Content Domain III does cover many of the major elements of writing.

Since the *American Literature and Composition* EOCT is a multiple-choice test, you will not have to do any actual writing. Instead, many of the questions in this domain will provide you with samples of writing, and your task will be to distinguish the good writing from the poor writing. Some of the questions will present a single sentence for you to evaluate, while others will present a short passage with numbered sentences. The key to answering these questions is to distinguish the good writing traits from the poor writing traits. Overall, you want to make sure the writing in the passage is precise, well organized, and easy to understand.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Organize a writing sample ★

This standard is one of the shortest on the EOCT, but it may also be one of the most difficult. You must apply what you know about grammar, usage, and style to create an organized writing sample that sets a context and engages the reader, maintains a coherent

focus throughout, and signals closure. You will be tested on a variety of passages such as letters, reports, essays, journals, and newspaper articles.

Most people write because they have something to say. Journalists write newspaper articles to inform readers about a particular event. Fiction writers create stories that entertain readers and stimulate their imagination. Even a simple poem about roses is written for a reason.

The primary message of a piece of writing is often called the **thesis**, or main idea. Sometimes authors state the main idea very clearly. For example, suppose you are reading an essay titled “Why Standardized Tests Are Good for Students.” Chances are that the main idea of this essay is that standardized tests are good for students. This does not mean that the author expects you to simply accept this idea without question. Instead, the author tries to prove to the reader that the idea has merit. The author will use supporting ideas and examples to support the point.

Understanding the main idea is crucial to understanding the passage. It would be hard to understand the essay without realizing that the main idea of the essay is that standardized tests are good for students. (You don’t have to *agree* with the main idea, but you do have to *understand* it.) You would be missing the point of the essay if you did not pick up on the thesis correctly.

Tips for Finding the Main Idea and Subordinate Ideas

The questions for this standard will be based on informational passages. (See the short sample on page 61 or the passage “Edith Wharton” on page 46 for a longer example.)

Authors of informational text often use a traditional outline approach: first stating the main idea, then addressing all the supporting ideas, and ending by restating the main idea. See the example outline in the box.

From this outline, it is clear the main idea is that writers should consider the different resources available to them. The main idea for this paper will most likely be in the thesis sentence of the introductory paragraph. Each paragraph will support the main idea of considering different resources by identifying a category of resources (e.g., the World Wide Web) and then giving specific information about it.

OUTLINE

Title: Researching for Results

Thesis There are many different resources you can use when researching a writing topic.

- I. The library contains more than just books
 - a. Magazines
 - b. Reference materials
 - c. AV materials
 - d. Internet access
- II. Surf’s always up on the Web
 - a. Academic sites
 - b. News sites
 - c. Company sites
 - d. Personal sites
- III. Interview those in the know
 - a. Scholars in the field
 - b. Professionals

Concluding statement: When researching a writing topic, don’t limit yourself when there are so many resources available.

The **main** idea can often be found in one or more of these places:

- The title
- The thesis statement
- The conclusion

The **subordinate**, or supporting, ideas of a passage can often be found in one or more of these places:

- The topic sentence of each paragraph
- The body paragraphs

In a well-written passage, you'll find evidence to support main and subordinate ideas in the body paragraphs. This evidence might include the following:

- Anecdotes
- Descriptions
- Facts
- Statistics

The questions on the EOCT that address the main idea or subordinate ideas in a passage may look like this:

Which sentence does NOT fit with the main idea of the report?

Which sentence is the BEST thesis for this passage?

STRATEGY BOX—The Secrets of Organization

A gifted writer knows that there are many ways to organize information. Different topics require different structures. Some of the more common ways to organize a passage include:

- Chronological order
- Cause and effect
- Compare and contrast
- Asking and answering questions

A writer's choice of structure depends on the point he or she wants to make. A persuasive essay, for example, may start with "Why should you recycle?" and then be followed by the answer in a series of well-supported paragraphs.

A writer’s choice of words also influences the effectiveness of his or her writing. You have already reviewed specific mechanisms for achieving certain literary effects. Questions for this standard will focus more on the nuts and bolts of effective writing. For example, good writers use precise language. Compare the following sentences:

Jill brought stuff to the beach.

Jill brought a beach towel, a blanket, and a mystery novel for a day at the beach.

The first sentence is vague, while the second sentence provides detailed information that makes the writing more engaging.

Good writers also use action verbs in active rather than passive voice. Here again are two sentences to compare:

Money was stolen from the bank by a man wearing jeans and a baseball hat.

A man wearing jeans and a baseball cap robbed the bank and stole its money.

In the first sentence, the passive voice makes an exciting and potentially dangerous event seem dull. Bank officials might issue a statement using a sentence like this one to downplay the seriousness of the event. The active voice and action verbs in the second sentence provide a greater sense of urgency. A newspaper reporter might write a sentence more like the second one.

In sentences written in active voice, the subject of the sentence acts. It performs the action expressed by the verb. In sentences written in passive voice, the subject of the sentence is acted upon by the verb. The actor performing the action may be introduced with a “by” phrase or may not be mentioned. In the examples given above, the first sentence includes a “by” phrase—“by a man wearing jeans and a baseball hat.” An easy way to change passive voice into active voice is to look for that “by” phrase and make it the subject of the verb, as in the second sentence.

Questions for this standard will often be preceded by a short essay. You can treat these essays like mini-reading passages and use the same approach you would for a regular full-length reading passage. The questions could include determining the best topic sentence (i.e., one that introduces a topic or idea) or concluding sentence (i.e., one that summarizes a topic or idea), identifying a sentence that is out of sequence, or one that is extraneous or unrelated to the topic. Look over the essay to find the main idea. Then use this information to help you answer the questions.

Read the sample essay below:

Writing Around People

1) Each writer has his or her own composing process. 2) Some writers produce formal outlines before they begin writing a story or novel. 3) Other writers do not even know how a story will end until they actually write the conclusion. 4) Similarly, *where* authors choose to write also varies. 5) While the image we have of a writer is frequently that of a solitary, isolated individual, poring over sheets of paper, such is rarely the case. 6) In fact, writing tends to be a social endeavor. 7) Many writers wrote some of their best work with other people nearby.

8) Mark Twain, for example, wrote the novels *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* while sitting in a small octagonal building with windows on all sides so he could write while his children played in the yard around him. 9) Twain's children have the last name Clemens, because Mark Twain's real name was Samuel Clemens. 10) Ernest Hemingway, too, wrote many of his stories and novels sitting at a table in a busy café in Paris. 11) Kate Chopin wrote on a special "lap desk" that she could carry with her. 12) As her children played and moved from place to place, she could place her things in the small desk, pack it up, and follow them. 13) Wherever her children stopped, she stopped too; while they played, she worked.

1 Which statement is the BEST thesis for this passage?

- A Some writers do their best work when surrounded by people.
- B Each writer has his or her own organizational style.
- C A lap desk freed writer Kate Chopin from the limitations of working indoors at a regular desk.
- D Mark Twain was unable to write unless he could see his children playing outside.

For this question, understanding the main idea of these paragraphs will lead you to the right answer. Are the paragraphs mostly about Kate Chopin or Mark Twain? They are not, so choices **C** and **D** are too specific to act as a good thesis for the passage. This leaves choices **A** and **B**. Choice **B** is certainly part of the passage, but choice **A** is more closely related to all of the content. It is the BEST answer.

2 Which sentence would be the BEST topic sentence for the second paragraph?

- A sentence 4
- B sentence 7
- C sentence 8
- D sentence 13

For this question, your goal is to find the sentence in the two paragraphs that can serve as the topic sentence for the second paragraph. That paragraph is a series of examples without a topic sentence. Since well-developed paragraphs group ideas together in an

intelligent and logical manner, moving sentence 7 to the start of the second paragraph makes the most sense. Choice **B** is correct.

3 Which information does NOT belong in the passage?

- A sentence 1
- B sentence 3
- C sentence 9
- D sentence 10

For this question, knowing the thesis will help you to identify inappropriate information or anecdotes. The essay is about the writing process. Choices **A** and **B** elaborate on the writing process. Choice **D** gives a specific example of how one writer—Mark Twain—worked. The information about Twain’s pen name and his children’s names is not necessary. The correct answer is choice **C**.

STRATEGY BOX—Choose the BEST Answer

As you take the EOCT, you will often come across answers that are close to the one you had in mind. Keep reading! You need to find the BEST answer, and it may be the last one. You can note which answer choice you think is correct as you read the choices, but don’t mark your final answer until you’ve read through all the choices. There may be more than one answer that looks good, but there is only one correct answer.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Demonstrate ability to convey information and ideas from primary and secondary sources accurately and coherently ★

This standard elaborates on the previous standard. You will be asked to choose the best sentences to use to engage an audience, develop a controlling idea, summarize a passage, or provide detailed information in a style and tone that is appropriate for the intended audience. The passages will be informational, such as reports, articles, or essays. You may also be tested on rhetorical devices (e.g., repetition, analogy) used to enhance the meaning of a text.

To prepare for this section, you should review your knowledge of thesis statements and main ideas. You may also want to look ahead to the next standard, which reviews research techniques, primary and secondary sources, and the correct use of note cards.

STRATEGY BOX—Become a Detective

Take a close look at the passage. What kind of support does the author offer? Does the author use personal examples, descriptive details, endorsements (testimonials), statistics, relevant research, facts, opinions, or hearsay as support? The kind of support tells a lot about how well the author has chosen information and how well he or she can incorporate primary and secondary sources into his writing. For example, if the author uses a personal example to make a point about how well a medical procedure works, it is not as effective as providing scientific research to support the claim.

Questions for this standard will ask you to identify and use rhetorical devices, such as parallelism, repetition, and analogy. **Parallelism** is the repetition of similar parts of a sentence or of several sentences to show that the phrases or sentences are of equal importance. (In Content Domain IV, you will be asked about parallelism as it relates to verb tenses and phrases.) In order to be parallel, the phrases or sentences must share the same grammatical structure. Parallelism also provides a certain rhythm to the work. The sentence “I came, I saw, I conquered” would not make quite the impact if it were rewritten “I came, saw, and conquered.”

Repetition is part of parallelism. Good writers may repeat words or phrases throughout their writing to emphasize a point. Be careful not to overdo this rhetorical strategy. If you repeat the same words and phrases too much, your writing becomes dull, not emphatic.

Analogy is another important rhetorical device. Like a simile, an analogy compares two items. An analogy, however, can be more extensive than a simile. A good writer may use an analogy to help convey difficult ideas by comparing them to things or ideas most people know. For example, an expository piece on maintaining your health

Don't Always Believe Everything You Read

Be careful when doing research online. We often accept the accuracy of what we read in books because we know that publishers and the editors who work for them would not stay in business long if they printed books full of factual errors. But people who “publish” material online do not have the same pressure to be accurate. Practically anyone with a computer and an Internet account can publish material online. It is important that you consider the source of any material you find on the Internet. When you find a Web resource, try to find out what person or organization is publishing it, and then ask yourself if that person or organization is a respectable, trustworthy source for information on the topic you are researching.

might compare your body to a car. Most people know that cars need fuel, just as the body needs food. A car needs to have its oil checked regularly, just as humans need to have their blood pressure checked. This analogy might continue throughout the article.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Use research and technology to support writing ★

Questions for this standard will test your ability to choose the best sources and methods for researching a particular topic. You will also be asked how to add quotations and documented citations into a text using appropriate conventions.

The research process refers to many different steps related to finding information. Roughly speaking, it means going to appropriate resources (e.g., the library or the World Wide Web) with a question and finding a way to answer it. Since the *American Literature and Composition EOCT* is an English test, the focus is on the kind of research you would do for an English assignment. This can be broken into various steps, as seen below.

Some Steps in the Research Process

1. Deciding on a Topic. When determining a topic for a paper, be sure to keep the scope in the proper range. Most students pick topics that are too broad to cover in the number of pages they have been assigned. For instance, they might decide to write a three-page paper on “American authors of the past hundred years.” This topic is just too broad for a three-page paper (or even a three-volume series). It would be better to pick a single author, like Eudora Welty, for your paper. Three pages are enough for a very brief introduction to Welty’s life and works.

Students can also experience the opposite problem—a topic that is too narrow in scope. For example, it would probably be a stretch to write three pages about Eudora Welty’s favorite animal. The EOCT might ask you to select the best research topic among several choices. You would need to consider which choices are too broad or too narrow and eliminate those.

Read All About It

Here is a list of some common reference materials:

- ✓Dictionary
- ✓Thesaurus
- ✓Atlas
- ✓Almanac
- ✓Encyclopedia
- ✓Library catalog

Here is a list of some less common reference materials:

- ✓Microfiche
- ✓Speeches
- ✓Journals
- ✓Technical documents

2. Locating Primary and Secondary Sources. Once you have decided on a topic, you need to locate sources. **Primary sources** are records of events by people who participated in or witnessed the events. For an English paper, an author’s work, like Welty’s *Delta Wedding*, is a primary source. Personal interviews and newspaper accounts are also primary sources. **Secondary sources** are records of events by people who did not participate. A textbook is a secondary source, as are literary reviews and criticism. The growing popularity of computers and the Internet has changed the way research is conducted. One of the best ways to begin to gather information on a topic is to go to an Internet search engine and type in some key words. You can find primary and secondary sources online. For instance, simply typing in *Eudora Welty* will bring you a number of links to different Web sites.

Using additional key words, however, will help you refine your search. If you are interested in writing about Welty’s life, entering the key words *Eudora Welty* and *biography* or *early childhood* should lead you to sites that discuss her life. However, if you are interested in one of her works in particular, you would be better off typing in *Eudora Welty*, *The Optimist’s Daughter* (one of her novellas) and then perhaps *review* or *criticism*. Using these key words should give you links to sites where people discuss or review *The Optimist’s Daughter*.

The Internet should not be your only research tool. A question on the EOCT may ask you to choose the best source for a given topic. These sources may include books, journals, microfiches, almanacs, documentaries, or CD-ROMs. See the next section for more detail.

3. Paraphrasing Information. Research papers would be a lot easier if you were allowed simply to copy down, word for word, exactly what your source material said. This is **plagiarism**, and it is illegal. Instead, you need to take the information you read and rewrite it in your own words. This process is known as paraphrasing. Questions on this aspect of the research process might ask you to select the correct way to quote material from sources.

What Is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is taking someone else’s words or ideas and presenting them as your own. You may only use another person’s words (either the exact wording or a paraphrase) if you cite the source (give credit to where you found the information). If you use the exact same wording as the original, you need to put these words in quotation marks.

STRATEGY BOX—Organizing and Recording Information

Recording information on note cards remains one of the most effective ways to keep track of information. Note cards also provide a great way to organize your information. You can shuffle and reshuffle the cards until you get them in an order that will allow you to write an outline.

But using note cards is not the only way to organize information. Depending on what information you need and how you need to use it, you may find other systems of organization more effective. These might include **anecdotal scripting**, a term for recording the events in a literary work. As you read a novel, particularly a long one, you might find yourself forgetting the order in which events occurred. Keeping a list or timeline of events will help you remember what happened. A simple way to do this is to summarize an event and write down the page number(s) on which it occurred. You may want to record dates, if given. If an author uses flashback regularly, you should also develop a method for noting if the event described on page 145 actually occurred before an event on page 35. If you are reading nonfiction, a timeline might be more beneficial. Be sure to include page numbers for the events. An index can help you locate these events, but your own record is better. When you begin writing your research paper on a novel, for example, anecdotal scripting will make it easier for you to locate important events that you want to discuss in your paper.

Another system for organizing and recording information is an **annotated bibliography**. As you compile the list of resources you've consulted, add more information about each book. The annotation should contain the following:

- Brief summary of the work—Your summary should include the thesis and main supporting evidence.
- Evaluation of the author—Does this author have the background to support the work? For example, is a book providing medical information written by a doctor or someone without medical training?
- Intended audience—For whom was this book written? A story about Pocahontas written for elementary school students might not be the best source for your biography of Pocahontas.
- Evaluation of usefulness—How will this book or article help you with your research topic? Is this book a good source for anecdotes or statistics? You should put this kind of information in this last category.

Other systems for organizing information include outlines, mindmaps, charts, and graphs. You should try a few methods and see which one works best for you.

Identifying and Analyzing Sources

Questions on the EOCT will ask about appropriate sources for research. You will also need to synthesize information from different reference materials. **Reference materials** refer to informative, nonfiction resources, like a dictionary or an electronic source such as the Galileo virtual library. For the EOCT, it will be helpful to be familiar with the purpose of these materials and how to use them. If you would like to learn more about these materials, go to the library and take a look at them.

In addition to being knowledgeable about reference materials, it is also helpful to know the parts of a book and the function of each part. This information can help you locate information quickly.

Once you've assembled your sources, you need to determine which source provides you with the type of information you need. One aspect of this standard tests your ability to choose the best written or electronic source to use in researching a topic. A question might look like this:

Which is the best source to consult for an overview of American poets of the nineteenth century?

- A** an unabridged dictionary
- B** a textbook of American history
- C** a collection of experimental poetry
- D** an encyclopedia of American literature

The correct choice is **D**. An encyclopedia of American literature will give an overview of literary movements and time periods; it will also list and describe writers of each time period. An unabridged dictionary, choice **A**, might include some poets in the biographical section, but will not categorize them by century and nationality. A dictionary will give only brief information. The history textbook in choice **B** might also mention some poets, but the focus will be on history and not on the details of literature. The poetry collection in choice **C** might contain brief background information, but will include poems from other time periods and will also not go into much detail about individual poets.

You will need to resolve any discrepancies among sources to determine which statistics to use. This will involve checking the accuracy and validity of facts.

You should also carefully analyze the different perspectives and viewpoints you find in your sources. Depending on a writer's perspective, you may find different information. A logger writing about saving his job may not mention the threats that logging poses to some animals. An environmentalist writing about saving the spotted owl may not mention the loggers who will lose their jobs if logging is restricted. For a research paper on logging and the environment, you would need to include both viewpoints.

Documenting Your Sources

When you use information from another source, you need to give credit where credit is due, or **cite** where you found the information (See *What Is Plagiarism* on page 65). Do you create a bibliography or a works cited list? Both look similar, but a works cited list only documents the works you have specifically referenced in your paper. A bibliography contains all the works you consulted during your research. It may include works you did not cite.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ *Use the writing process to develop, revise, and evaluate writing* ★

Great works of literature do not flow effortlessly from the pens (or keyboards) of their authors. Most stories, essays, poems, and articles require hard work and revision before they can be considered excellent, or even very good. Even professional writers and famous authors struggle with their words. Drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading your writing are all elements of the writing process. Performing these tasks well is an important part of being a good writer, which is why this standard is tested on the EOCT.

The questions for this standard will focus on your ability to recognize the best revisions to poor writing to make the writing clear. You will be asked to consider the best way to rewrite awkwardly worded sentences, misplaced modifiers, and other errors in sentence structure.

Steps in the Writing Process

- Step 1. Prewriting:** Gathering ideas, organizing your thoughts
- Step 2. Drafting:** Creating a rough version of the paper, often more than one
- Step 3. Revising and Editing:** Looking at your draft with a critical eye and making improvements
- Step 4. Proofreading:** Polishing your paper to make sure it is free of errors
- Step 5. Publishing:** Sharing your finished paper with others

Questions for this standard will be based on a passage. For this example, only the first sentence of the passage is included.

(1) Arriving late at the movie someone else was in our seats.

Which, if any, would be the BEST way to revise sentence 1?

- A At the movie, we found someone else was in our seats arriving late.
- B We found someone else was in our seats arriving late at the movie.
- C Arriving late at the movie, we found someone else was in our seats.
- D Leave as is

The correct choice is **C** because it rewrites the sentence most clearly.

STRATEGY BOX—Trust Yourself

If you can't determine the exact problem with a sentence, don't be afraid to trust your ear and make an educated guess. You can often "hear" a problem even if you can't explain exactly what is wrong with the sentence.

This standard also tests your ability to revise writing for specific audiences and purposes. Much of the writing you do today is probably academic or school-related. However, you may find yourself called upon to write for other purposes. These include writing thank-you notes, cover letters for business résumés, and complaint letters. These different activities require using a variety of formats, as well as different levels of formal and informal language.

Try to imagine the intended audience for a particular piece of writing. Is it written for business associates or a group of close friends? Is a teacher going to read it, or does it contain thoughts that the author did not intend to share with anyone? Understanding who the intended audience is will help you understand the purpose of the writing.

Understanding your audience also helps you use appropriate language. Depending on your situation and the people to whom you are talking, you will choose different words. Let's say you would like an apple. If you are talking to a friend, you might just say, "Hey, give me an apple" or "Let me have that apple, dude." But what if you asked your school's principal? The principal is an important person in your school, so you should use language that is more formal. "Excuse me, Principal Edwards, may I please have an apple?" is a more appropriate way to make this request.

Generally speaking, you will have to choose between formal and informal language. Typically, formal language is more grammatically precise and contains longer sentences

and more elaborate wording. In contrast, informal language is not always grammatically accurate and it may involve slang words and phrases.

The following chart provides some examples of formal and informal language.

Informal	Formal
Howdy, y'all!	Greetings, ladies and gentlemen.
What's up?	How are you?
Let's hit the beach.	We should choose a seaside location for our vacation.
Those are some crazy threads!	Your outfit is very unique.

STRATEGY BOX—Who Is Your Audience?

Using appropriate language often comes down to deciding on whether formal or informal language should be used. Therefore, consider the situation and audience. If the situation is relaxed and between friends or family, informal language is suitable. If the situation is more official and there are strangers or important people involved, use formal language. The goal is to match the formality of the situation and audience with the formality of the writing.

Good writers adjust their vocabulary, style, and tone to fit their intended audiences. Questions for this standard will ask you to determine the appropriate language for a particular audience. Try the sample question below:

This passage is from a book review written for a high school English class.

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince is the latest novel in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series. It is the next-to-last installment in a planned seven-book series. Readers have had to wait two years for this book. This new book begins where *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* ends. It pulls together plot lines and story twists from all the previous Harry Potter books. Dark and twisting, this novel rocks.

Which phrase is too informal for the passage?

- A Readers have had to wait
- B This new book begins
- C plot lines and story twists
- D this novel rocks

Remember the audience for this review: a high school English teacher. A book review is a formal document requiring formal language. Choice **D** is the correct answer. (You might use this type of informal language when reviewing the book on your blog.)

Study Ideas for Content Domain III

To do well on the questions for this domain, you must be able to recognize good writing and understand the importance of audience and purpose. As you look at passages for the other content domains, consider how the writers' word choice and sentence structure give clues to their audience and purpose. Basically, to practice for the writing questions on this domain, you should analyze the writing you see around you.

You should also go to the library and practice researching a topic. It does not have to be a topic for class. It should be a topic in which you are interested and would like to learn more about. Do not limit yourself to the encyclopedias. You want to get experience using a variety of research resources.

You may also want to find a variety of reference materials (e.g., almanac, dictionary, thesaurus, atlas). Review them and compare their contents. How could each be helpful to someone doing research?

If you have questions about resource materials or the research process, ask your English teacher or a media specialist to help you.

Take a Tour

One of the best ways to become a better researcher and better student is to take a guided tour of your library. Ask about a tour at the main desk. Even if you plan to do all your research at the school library, you can usually arrange for a librarian to show you around. You will learn a lot of valuable information that will save you hours of frustration later—like how to use the library's catalog system, where to find microfilm materials and how to use them, where to find reference books, where to find magazines, and more.

Sample Questions for Content Domain III

This section has some sample questions for you to try. After you have answered each question, the correct answer will be provided as well as an explanation as to why the other answer choices are incorrect.

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

A Review of *Our Town*

(1) Written by American playwright Thornton Wilder, *Our Town* tells the story of Emily Gibbs, a young woman living in the town of Grover's Corners. (2) Since it was first produced in 1938, *Our Town* has been inspiring audiences across the country and around the world. (3) Wilder received his second Pulitzer Prize for this drama (Lewis, 54). (4) The play is notable for its innovative staging. (5) While many plays feature extensive stage props and scenery, *Our Town* features little more than chairs for the actors to sit on. (6) Even when Emily and her friends sip sodas at a local store, the actors pretend to hold beverages. (7) Wilder wanted to place the focus directly on the characters themselves, rather than on irrelevant elements. (8) *Our Town*, written as events in Europe were building toward World War II, was Wilder's attempt to draw Americans' focus to the small things in life that make it worthwhile.

Works Cited

Lewis, John. *Our Town: A Critical Look*. New York: Playwright Editions, 2004.

1 Which is the best placement for sentence 3?

- A before sentence 1
- B after sentence 6
- C after sentence 7
- D leave as is

Answer: C Standard: *Organize a writing sample*

When you read sentence 3, you realize that it provides information about the play, but it also interrupts the discussion of the play itself. Choices **B** and **D** are incorrect because that sentence would interrupt the description of the play. Choice **A** is incorrect because it would put detailed information about the play before the play is even mentioned. Choice **C** is correct because it puts the sentence where it does not interrupt and provides a sort of closure for the passage.

2 What is the main purpose of the passage?

- A to describe the life of Thornton Wilder
- B to promote a local production of *Our Town*
- C to provide a brief overview of *Our Town*
- D to offer a traveler's guide to Grover's Corners

Answer: **C** Standard: *Demonstrate ability to convey information and ideas from primary and secondary sources accurately and coherently*

In order to determine purpose, you need to look at what kind of information the passage contains. While the passage contains some information relevant to choice **A**, it is not a biography of Wilder. This information could be used to promote a production of the play, but choice **B** is incorrect because the passage contains no details on when or where the play will be staged. Choice **D** is incorrect because Grover’s Corners is a fictional place. Choice **C**, therefore, is correct. The purpose of the passage is to provide an overview of the play.

3 Which sentence, if included, would disrupt the formal tone of the passage?

- A** Thornton Wilder won lots of prizes for other things he wrote.
- B** The staging of the play shocked the first people to see it.
- C** The early reviews of *Our Town* were quite enthusiastic.
- D** Over the years, *Our Town* has become increasingly popular.

Answer: **A** Standard: *Use the writing process to develop, revise, and evaluate writing*

The question asks you to consider the context of the passage, which includes the purpose and the audience as well as the content. When you read the answer choices to this question, one clearly uses more informal language, choice **A**. The phrases “lots of prizes” and “other things he wrote” are too informal for something that will be read by the general public. Each of the other choices would be appropriate in content and style if added to the passage.

4 Which is the BEST way to write sentence 1?

- A** Written by American playwright Thornton Wilder, *Our Town* is telling the story of Emily Gibbs, a young woman living in the town of Grover’s Corners.
- B** *Our Town*, written by American playwright Thornton Wilder, the story of Emily Gibbs, a young woman living in the town of Grover’s Corners.
- C** The story of Emily Gibbs, telling about a young woman living in the town of Grover’s Corners, written by American playwright Thornton Wilder, and is called *Our Town*.
- D** Leave as is

Answer: **D** Standard: *Use the writing process to develop, revise, and evaluate writing*

When you are asked to choose the best way to write a sentence, you must read every answer choice as well as the original sentence in the passage. In this case, the original

sentence was correct so the answer is **D**, “Leave as is.” Choices **A** and **C** are written unclearly, and choice **B** is a fragment and grammatically incorrect.

5 Use the information below to answer question 5.

Staging of *Our Town*

The play opens when a character called the Stage Manager introduces the town and the characters.

Lewis, 74

Where would the information from this note card BEST fit in the passage?

- A** after sentence 1
- B** after sentence 4
- C** after sentence 7
- D** does not belong in the passage

Answer: **B** Standard: *Demonstrate ability to convey information and ideas from primary and secondary sources accurately and coherently*

Sentence 4 introduces the topic of staging in *Our Town*. The information on the note card provides more information on this topic. Choice **D** is, therefore, incorrect. Choices **A** and **C** are incorrect because they are not close to the sentences on staging. Choice **B** is correct because it is the best location for the new information.

Content Domain IV: Conventions

A Look at Content Domain IV



Test questions in this domain will measure your ability to apply the conventions of Standard American English and to demonstrate an understanding of different writing formats. Your answers to these questions will help show how well you can perform on the following standards:

- Demonstrate understanding and control of the rules of the English language
- Apply conventions of Standard American English to formal manuscript requirements

Content Domain IV focuses on your ability to apply the conventions of Standard American English correctly. Questions for this content domain will ask you to revise texts for organization, purpose, precision of word choice, and correct grammar and punctuation. You will also be asked to demonstrate an understanding of different forms of writing.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ *Demonstrate understanding of Standard American English* ★

To test your knowledge of Standard American English, you will be asked to identify and correct the grammatical errors in a passage. You may also be tested on different methods of sentence construction.

The list below identifies some of the topics you can expect to see on the EOCT.

- Main and subordinate clauses
- Gerund, participial, and infinitive phrases
- Punctuation marks (e.g., end punctuation, commas, colons, semicolons, quotation marks, ellipses, and hyphens)
- Verb tense consistency and agreement
- Proper placement of modifiers

- Precise word choice
- Spelling
- Parallel structure

If any of these terms are unfamiliar to you, please talk to your teacher or research them in a grammar handbook. Each of these topics has a number of subtopics and rules associated with it, so it is important that you use resource materials that will give you this information. All questions for this domain will be based on a passage, which will contain some errors. Questions will look something like this:

A Closer Look at Phrases

A **gerund phrase** combines a gerund with the object of the gerund or other modifiers. A gerund is a verb used as a noun, with an *-ing* ending.

A **participial phrase** includes the participle and the object of the participle. A participle is a form of a verb, but it does not act as a verb. Rather, it acts as an adjective, often ending in *-ing* or *-ed*.

An **infinitive phrase** includes an infinitive and any modifiers or complements. An infinitive is always a verb with *to* in front of it. The phrase can serve as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

What is the correct way to write sentence 5?

- A Teresa studied for an hour, outlined her paper, and then had taking a break.
- B Teresa studied for an hour, outlined her paper, and then takes a break.
- C Teresa studied for an hour, outlined her paper, and then took a break.
- D Teresa studied for an hour, outlined her paper, and then will take a break.

For this question, think about how often you hear people say, “then had taking.” If it sounds odd to you, it is because there is no such verb tense. This means choice **A** is wrong. Choices **B** and **D** do not seem right either. The verb tense shifts in both of these sentences. You might not notice this specifically, but you probably sensed there was something strange about saying Teresa “studied” and then “takes” or “will take” a break. Contrast this with choice **C**, which uses the same verb tense throughout. This is the correct answer.

This question also tests **parallelism**, which states that objects linked together have to be similar in tense and number. In this case, the verbs *studied*, *outlined*, and *taking* are a series of actions joined together by the conjunction *and*. However, the sentence in the question is incorrect because the verbs—studied, outlined, and taking—are not in the same tense. Changing *taking* to *took* corrects this problem because now all the verbs—*studied*, *outlined*, and *took*—are in the past tense.



Spotlight on the Standards

★ Apply conventions of Standard American English to formal manuscript requirements ★

Questions for this standard will again test your knowledge of Standard American English, but they will also focus on how well you know formatting requirements for manuscripts. To correctly answer these questions, you should review the *Use Research and Technology to Support Writing* standard in Content Domain III.

You will also be asked questions about how your manuscript should be formatted. These questions may ask you about pagination, spacing, and margins.

Study Ideas for Content Domain IV

To study for this domain, you may want to concentrate on the kinds of errors you typically make in your own writing. (Your teacher may be able to help you with this.) If you know what these errors are, look them up in your grammar book and study the samples. Or, you may want to work through a grammar workbook that will allow you to practice in the areas that need improvement. If you are not sure of your weak areas, you may want to take a look at samples of each topic in your grammar book. (See the list of topics on pages 75–76 of this study guide.) If any are not clear to you, work through some practice items in a grammar workbook for those topics.

Sample Questions for Content Domain IV

This section has some sample questions for you to try. After you have answered each question, the correct answer will be provided as well as an explanation as to why the other answer choices are incorrect.

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

Phyllis Wheatley

(1) Phyllis Wheatley accomplished many amazing feats in her life. (2) She learned to read and write. (3) While learning to read and write may not sound like an unusual accomplishment, Wheatley lived in the American colonies during the late 1700s, when only a tiny handful of people were actually literate. (4) Moreover, Wheatley studied History, geography, Latin, and many other difficult subjects. (5) In 1767 she publishes her first poem in a local newspaper. (6) Later, while in London, Wheatley met Selina Hasting, an English countess who helped her to publish a book of poetry. (7) Wheatley's book was the first poetry collection ever published by an African-American writer. (8) As she toured England to promote her book, noted figures such as Benjamin Franklin and French writer Voltaire recognized her achievement. (9) Wheatley even sent a poem to George Washington, praising him for his efforts in the American Revolution. (10) Phyllis Wheatley's determination paved the way for the later successes of her life.

1 Which would be the BEST transition to add to the beginning of sentence 2?

- A First,
- B However,
- C Nevertheless,
- D In addition,

Answer: **A** Standard: *Demonstrate understanding and control of the rules of the English language*

To answer this question, you need to have a sense of what the whole paragraph is about: the accomplishments of Phyllis Wheatley. You also need to recognize where sentence 2 is located in the paragraph: near the beginning. Choices **B** and **C** are transitions implying contrast, yet nothing is being contrasted here. Choice **D** suggests that the author wishes to add to ideas already stated. The paragraph is just introducing the ideas, however, so **A** is the most logical choice.

2 If this paragraph were in a history report, which phrase would BEST replace the underlined words, *a tiny handful*, in sentence 3?

- A a limited collection
- B a small number
- C a little bunch
- D a microscopic sampling

Answer: **B** Standard: *Demonstrate understanding and control of the rules of the English language*

In order to answer this question, you must consider the writer’s purpose and audience. A history report is an academic piece of writing, so the language should be formal. You can rule out choice **C** because “bunch” is too informal. Choice **D** is formal language, but it doesn’t make sense with the subject, a group of people. Choice **A** is also somewhat formal but the wording is imprecise. Choice **B** is formal enough to fit the purpose of writing and accurate enough to reflect the idea. Therefore the correct answer is **B**.

3 Which sentence contains an error in verb tense?

- A sentence 1
- B sentence 4
- C sentence 5
- D sentence 6

Answer: **C** Standard: *Demonstrate understanding and control of the rules of the English language*

This passage is written in the past tense. All the sentences should be in the past tense. Choices **A**, **B**, and **D** are in the past tense. Choice **C** is in the present tense and is the correct answer.

4 Which word in sentence 4 contains an error in capitalization?

- A Wheatley
- B History
- C geography
- D Latin

Answer: **B** Standard: *Apply conventions of standard American English and format*

Proper nouns, as in Choices **A** and **D**, are capitalized. *Geography* and *history* are not proper nouns. Choice **C** is not capitalized. **B** is the choice with the incorrect capitalization, so it is the correct answer.

5 Which phrase from the paragraph is a participial phrase?

- A** learning to read and write
- B** to publish a book of poetry
- C** As she toured England to promote her book
- D** praising him for his efforts in the American Revolution

Answer: **D** Standard: *Demonstrate understanding and control of the rules of the English language*

A participial phrase includes a verb ending in *-ing* that acts as an adjective. Choice **A** is a gerund phrase. Choice **B** is an infinitive phrase. Choice **C** is a subordinate clause. Choice **D**, a participial phrase, is the correct answer.

Basic Literary Elements

1. **Language.** Language makes literature. The words and phrases an author uses create literary works. Language and word choices vary with different literary genres. For example, the way you express your thoughts in a poem is very different than the way you express your thoughts in an essay.

One of the first choices a writer makes about language is which word to use. **Diction** refers to the word choices a writer makes. Read the following sentences and reflect on how changing one word can change its meaning.

Sentence 1: “Hey, y’all, let’s go to the store.”

Sentence 2: “Hey, you guys, let’s go to the store.”

Y’all in the first sentence and *you guys* in the second gives you information about where the story occurs. The diction might also influence your opinion of the speaker.

Diction is not the only choice to influence writing. Authors employ a variety of techniques to express meaning and engage the reader. Some may use **figurative language**, or figures of speech, to convey meaning other than the literal meaning of the word. Metaphors and similes are examples of figures of speech. (Please see pages 37–38 for more information on figurative language.)

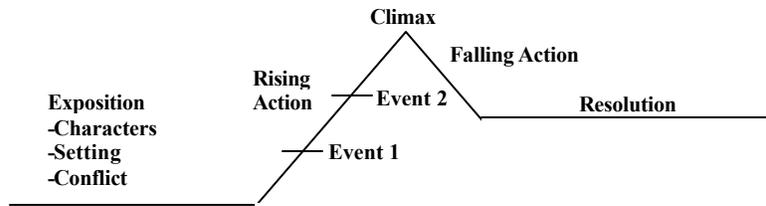
Imagery, or description intended to elicit a sensory response, allows an author to show, rather than tell, a reader something. You have heard the phrase “a picture is worth a thousand words.” Well, writers use imagery to convey more than they could with literal words.

Symbolism is another way in which writers use language to express something more than the literal meaning of the words. A symbol is something that stands for something else. For example, an object may symbolize an idea.

2. **Plot.** Literature commonly follows a specific pattern or plot structure. It often begins with **exposition** that may introduce the characters, establish the setting, and reveal the problem or conflict. The tension may build through a series of **complications** (incidents that either help or hinder the protagonist in finding a solution). This is the **rising action**. The **climax** is the peak or turning point of the action. The problem is resolved. At this point the reader usually knows the outcome. The **denouement** or **falling action** is the part after the climax. It gives any necessary explanation and ends with **resolution**, the sense that the story is complete.

STRATEGY BOX—Map It Out

Using a plot map can help you better understand a story's development.



3. **Conflict.** Every plot has a conflict. The conflict is what triggers the action in the story. Here are some common conflicts in literature:
- person vs. person
 - person vs. nature
 - person vs. self
 - person vs. society
 - person vs. machine
4. **Character development.** The plot of a story focuses on the lives of one or more characters. The main character is usually the **protagonist**, the central character and the one with whom the reader often identifies. The **antagonist** is a character (or force) that opposes the protagonist. An author may reveal character through the character's thoughts, words, appearance, and actions, or through what other characters say or think. An author may also tell us directly what the character is like. Characters that grow or change throughout the story are **dynamic** or **round**; characters that seem to stay the same are **static** or **flat**. Understanding the characters is a key element to understanding the piece of literature. Here are some common questions about characterization:
- Who is the main character? Give five traits of this character.
 - Who are the minor characters? How do they affect the plot?
 - How is one character similar to or different from another?
 - How is the main character involved in the conflict?
5. **Setting.** The setting is when and where a story takes place. You may be asked to determine why the setting is important or how the setting affects the characters. The setting can clarify conflict, illuminate character, affect the mood (see #6 below), and act as a symbol. The setting itself can be an antagonist in a person vs. nature conflict.
6. **Mood.** The mood in a piece of literature is a feeling or emotion created by the words and setting. Some authors create the mood by using imagery along with the setting.

The example below shows how the mood of a story can change by making a few alterations:

Imagine a group of people in an old, three-story house. The people are whispering and walking very slowly. They are easily startled. Some are visibly shaking. The mood created here is one of scary suspense. A reader will wonder what scared the people and may feel some suspense about the events to come.

Now, change the mood by imagining the people talking loudly. They are gesturing at various rooms in the house and whistling appreciatively. They seem excited about the old, colored-glass windows. A reader could assume that these people are about to move into the old house. The mood is no longer scary and suspenseful. It is now light and optimistic.

7. **Irony.** Irony is a form of speech intended to convey the opposite of the actual meaning of the words. You are probably most familiar with **verbal irony**, or sarcasm. The speaker's intended message is far different than the usual meaning of the words. For example, a teenager might tell his or her mother, "I just *love* cleaning up my room," when, in fact, the teenager means that he hates to clean his room. **Irony of fate** refers to developments that are far from what is expected or believed to be deserved. One example of irony of fate would be famed composer Ludwig von Beethoven's loss of hearing.
8. **Point of View.** The point of view is the perspective from which a story is told. The point of view depends upon who the narrator is and how much he or she knows.

<i>First Person</i>	The events are told by a character in the story using his or her own words. First-person stories have narrators who use <i>I</i> , <i>me</i> , and <i>my</i> throughout the story. The sentence, "I knew it was risky, but I was willing to take that chance," is an example of first-person point of view.
<i>Second Person</i>	The narrator addresses the reader directly using the word <i>you</i> . This perspective is not as common as either the first- or third-person points of view.
<i>Third Person</i>	A speaker outside the action narrates the events using <i>he</i> , <i>she</i> , and <i>they</i> . In third-person omniscient , the narrator may see and know everything, even the thoughts of all the characters. In third-person limited , the narrator tells the events from the perspective of one character, focusing on this character's thoughts and feelings.

9. **Theme.** The theme is the central idea of a text. It refers to a universal statement about life and/or society that can be discerned from reading a text. The theme of a work is not the same as its main idea, which focuses strictly on the content. The theme of a literary work is often the meaning you take away from it.

Appendix A

EOCT Sample Overall Study Plan Sheet

Here is a sample of what an OVERALL study plan might look like. You can use the Blank Overall Study Sheet in Appendix B or create your own.

Materials/Resources I May Need When I Study:
(You can look back at page 2 for ideas.)

1. *This study guide*
2. *Pens*
3. *Highlighter*
4. *Notebook*
5. *Dictionary*
6. *English textbook*

Possible Study Locations:

- First Choice: *The library*
- Second Choice: *My room*
- Third Choice: *My mom's office*

Overall Study Goals:

1. *Read and work through the entire study guide*
2. *Answer the sample questions and study the answers*
3. *Do additional reading in an English textbook*

Number of Weeks I Will Study: *6 weeks*

Number of Days a Week I Will Study: *5 days a week*

Best Study Times for Me:

- Weekdays: *7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.*
- Saturday: *9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.*
- Sunday: *2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.*

Appendix B

Blank Overall Study Plan Sheet

Materials/Resources I May Need When I Study:
(You can look back at page 2 for ideas.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Possible Study Locations:

- First Choice: _____
- Second Choice _____
- Third Choice _____

Overall Study Goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Number of Weeks I Will Study: _____

Number of Days a Week I Will Study: _____

Best Study Times for Me: _____

? Weekdays: _____

? Saturday: _____

? Sunday: _____

Appendix C

EOCT Sample Daily Study Plan Sheet

Here is a sample of what a DAILY study plan might look like. You can use the Blank Daily Study Plan Sheet in Appendix D or create your own.

Materials I May Need Today:

1. *Study Guide*
2. *Pen*
3. *Notebook*

Today's Study Location: *The desk in my room*

Study Time Today: *From 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. with a short break at 7:30 p.m.*
 (Be sure to consider how long you can actively study in one sitting. Can you sit for 20 minutes? 30 minutes? An hour? If you say you will study for three hours, but get restless after 40 minutes, anything beyond 40 minutes may not be productive—you will most likely fidget and daydream your time away. “Doing time” at your desk doesn’t count for real studying.)

If I start to get tired or lose focus today, I will *do some sit-ups.*

Today's Study Goals and Accomplishments: (Be specific. Include things like number of pages, sections, or standards. The more specific you are, the better able you will be to tell if you reached your goals. Keep it REALISTIC. You will retain more if you study small “chunks” or blocks of material at a time.)

<i>Study Task</i>	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Needs more work</i>	<i>Needs more information</i>
<i>1. Review what I learned last time</i>	X		
<i>2. Study the first standard in Content Domain I</i>	X		
<i>3. Study the second standard in Content Domain I</i>		X	

What I learned today:

1. *The different structures of fiction writing*
2. *How to distinguish between fact and opinion*
3. *The definition of common modes of rhetoric*

Today's reward for meeting my study goals: *Eating some popcorn*

Appendix D

Blank Daily Study Plan Sheet

Materials I May Need Today:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Today's Study Location: _____

Study Time Today: _____

(Be sure to consider how long you can actively study in one sitting. Can you sit for 20 minutes? 30 minutes? An hour? If you say you will study for three hours, but get restless after 40 minutes, anything beyond 40 minutes may not be productive—you will most likely fidget and daydream your time away. “Doing time” at your desk doesn’t count for real studying.)

If I start to get tired or lose focus today, I will _____

Today's Study Goals and Accomplishments : (Be specific. Include things like number of pages, sections, or standards. The more specific you are, the better able you will be to tell if you reached your goals. Keep it REALISTIC. You will retain more if you study small “chunks” or blocks of material at a time.)

<i>Study Task</i>	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Needs more work</i>	<i>Needs more information</i>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

What I learned today:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Today's reward for meeting my study goals: _____