

The Development Cycle of the Washington Comprehensive Assessment System WCAP for Reading

Below are detailed descriptions of the development stages of the passages and items for the State's Reading Assessment.

Committees in which Washington educators participate are boxed.

Passage Selection Process

OSPI engages in a systematic process to find passages for the state Reading Assessment. OSPI's Reading Assessment staff and OSPI's assessment contractor search for appropriate published passages in libraries, on the internet, in children's literature, anthologies, magazines, and in materials suggested by teachers. Passages are selected for content and grade-level appropriateness. The initial selection of passages by OSPI and contractor staff is just the first step in the selection process. A Bias and Sensitivity review follows the passage selection process.

Bias and Sensitivity Review

The next crucial step in the passage development process is a Bias and Sensitivity review. During this review, a committee made up of Washington state teachers, community members, business representatives and parents representing a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, analyzes each passage for partiality issues that may impact student performance on the state assessment. After each passage has met the criteria for Bias and Sensitivity review, it is now eligible to advance to the Item Writing process.

Item Writing

During this step in the development process, a committee of Washington state educators conducts another thorough scrutiny of the passages. Teachers evaluate the passages with the same criteria used by OSPI and contractor staff. Their judgment on the appropriateness of the passage gives the "green light" to develop items for the passages. The committee receives training on the key elements of successful development of multiple choice, completion, stand-alone and constructed-response items. Scoring rubrics are developed for the completion, stand-alone and constructed-response items.

Item Review

After the item writing committee, OSPI and our contractor complete an in-depth technical review of each item. During this item review, cognitive load and language are carefully analyzed and/or revised. Rubrics for completion, stand-alone and constructed-response items are also analyzed and/or revised.

Content Review

After OSPI and our contractor complete the Item Review, passages and items undergo yet another quality control check by a Content Review committee. This committee, facilitated by our contractor, is comprised of educators who have not been involved in the previous stages of the development process. This additional development step ensures that "fresh eyes" review the passages and items.

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Bias and Sensitivity Review II

A second Bias and Sensitivity review occurs. This time, the committee reviews the items for partiality issues that may impact student performance on the state assessment. After the items have met the criteria for Bias and Sensitivity review, the passages and items are now eligible to be placed on the assessment as embedded pilot items.

Pilot Rangefinding

After the passages and items have been piloted by students in Washington State during the testing window, the pilot rangefinding committee, comprised of OSPI, educators, contractor staff, and scoring staff, reviews and rangefinds pilot completion, stand-alone and constructed-response items. Using student responses, the Pilot Rangefinding committee determines the scoring criteria for each completion, stand-alone and constructed-response items. Items that have been successfully rangefound are then scored by professional scorers who have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree.

Pilot Item Data Review

This committee reviews all data from the Reading Assessment pilot items. Student performance data for the multiple choice, completion, stand-alone and constructed-response items is analyzed to determine eligibility for operational testing. Items are analyzed for appropriate performance parameters including difficulty level, ethnic performance, stability, validity, and trends and patterns. Passages and items that survive this Pilot Item Data Review process are determined to be eligible for operational use on the assessment.

Operational Rangefinding

After the passages and items have been used operationally, they undergo another rangefinding process. This committee is also comprised of OSPI staff, educators, contractor staff, and scoring staff. The committee reviews and rangefinds operational completion, stand-alone and constructed-response items. The Operational Rangefinding committee finalizes the scoring rubrics for the constructed-response items using student responses from the Operational test. After Operational Rangefinding, items are scored by professional scorers.

Teacher Operational Scoring

Beginning in 2001 Washington State educators have been involved in scoring Writing, Mathematics, Science, and Reading items that are due for release after scoring. Passages and items that have been used operationally at least twice are eligible to be released to the field to assist in professional development and improvement of student performance.