

Connecticut State Department of Education

**Connecticut Academic Performance Test
(CAPT)
Third Generation Handbook
for
Reading and Writing Across the Disciplines**

Contents

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Foreword

On behalf of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), I am pleased to present the *Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) Third Generation Handbook for Reading and Writing Across the Disciplines*. The third generation CAPT, developed in 2004 and piloted in 2005 and 2006, will be administered live for the first time in March 2007.

This handbook has been developed to provide Connecticut's public school educators with important information about the CAPT reading and writing across the disciplines assessments. It should serve as a reference for all content area teachers as they prepare their students. It is designed to answer the frequently asked questions about these assessments. I urge you to review the handbook, and I hope it will be helpful in your efforts to improve reading and writing instruction across all disciplines in Connecticut's classrooms.

Additionally, the CSDE extends its appreciation to those educators who served as members of the CAPT reading and writing advisory and fairness committees.

George A. Coleman

George A. Coleman
Interim Commissioner of Education

Position Statement

Adopted February 4, 2004

The Connecticut State Board of Education believes a strong language arts program is essential to ensure students develop the skills needed to effectively comprehend and communicate. The language arts are unique because the underlying domains – reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and presenting – include skills and competencies applied to learning in all disciplines.

These domains are the means by which we communicate and receive ideas and acquire new information. The ability to communicate with others through these domains is essential for a productive life.

The Board believes the language arts contribute to children’s education and preparation for life in numerous ways. For example, the language arts program:

- provides a foundation for students’ success in all content areas and in future careers;
- enables students to obtain and communicate information;
- provides exposure to others’ lives and to worlds beyond their own through literary text;
- helps students use language to think critically and to solve problems in everyday life, and
- provides students with the tools and motivation to continue their learning beyond school.

A quality language arts education should therefore be part of the core curriculum for all Connecticut students. A PreK-12 language arts education program should enable students to achieve the goals and standards outlined in *Connecticut’s Common Core of Learning* [<http://www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/curriculum/currkey2.htm>] and *Connecticut’s English Language Arts Framework* [<http://www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/curriculum/currla.htm>]. By the end of high school, all graduates should be able to:

- develop and communicate informed opinions through reading, interpreting, and evaluating various texts;
- recognize the influences of individual, social, cultural, and historical contexts on readers and writers;
- read and interpret texts in a variety of disciplines;
- write in a variety of formats;
- write and speak in acceptable standard English;
- construct meaning from communications in a variety of forms;
- read and respond to a variety of authors, texts, and genres, and share responses to extend understanding and enjoyment;
- compose, revise, and edit written materials using conventions of standard English, including correct spelling, grammar, and legible writing;
- view theatre, film, and art with an eye toward appreciation and evaluation;
- apply effective listening and speaking skills in a variety of settings;
- communicate with others to create interpretations and evaluations of written, oral, and visual text, and
- appreciate the influence that contemporary and classical artists and authors have on human thought.

Improving student achievement in the language arts is therefore an important component of implementing the Board’s general education agenda.

In providing all children with a quality language arts education, everyone has a role.

Teachers and schools serve an essential role in ensuring quality language arts education by:

- providing a quality language arts program which includes reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing;
- providing a comprehensive PreK-12 reading program, which includes instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, oral language, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension;
- setting high expectations for all students to ensure earlier and more equitable opportunities to learn to read and write;
- providing a rigorous study of language arts skills and concepts and their applications to reading and writing in real-world contexts;
- creating classrooms that are rich learning environments that foster literacy in all students;
- providing more active student involvement with language arts, including: reading and writing that relate to students' current world and their future career needs and demands and using a variety of skills to foster effective communication and lifelong love of reading and writing;
- fostering more systematic and appropriate use of technological tools to enhance instruction in language arts;
- assessing students' knowledge and skills and providing appropriate instruction based on that assessment;
- providing students with evaluations that are continuous and based on many sources of evidence;
- using a variety of teaching strategies to guide students in developing literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities, and
- collaborating with colleagues, such as speech language pathologists, English as a Second Language professionals, and teachers of sign language in the acquisition of literacy, and serving as role models in speaking and writing.

Parents serve an essential role in children's language arts learning by:

- providing multiple opportunities to engage their children in conversations and communications about life experiences;
- talking to and questioning their children from a very young age and carefully listening to their responses;
- reading to their children regularly and listening to their children read, and
- setting up the home environment with many print, media and visual materials.

Teacher and administrator preparation and professional development programs serve an essential role in improving the quality of language arts education by:

- providing programs to develop skilled educators in the language arts;
- providing faculty members and administrators with opportunities to improve their ability to deliver quality instruction, including participation in local, statewide and regional in-service sessions and conferences specifically designed for employing the language arts in their discipline, and
- providing more professional collaboration and teacher externships to provide a stronger focus on language arts.

Introduction

The Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), Connecticut’s standardized summative assessment for 10th-grade students, assesses students on their achievement in mathematics, science, reading across the disciplines, and writing across the disciplines. The assessments are comprised of content that is reasonable to expect students to have mastered by the spring of 10th grade. Students are not compared to one another in terms of performance; rather, student performance is compared to an absolute standard of specific learning goals and objectives. These goals and objectives are identified by the Connecticut curriculum frameworks. The frameworks guide educators in designing instructional programs across all grades and disciplines to bring about continued improvement in student achievement.

State Documents

Connecticut’s English Language Arts Framework and *Connecticut’s Beyond the Blueprint* must be used in conjunction with this *Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) Third Generation Handbook for Reading and Writing Across the Disciplines* to implement high-quality instruction in all classrooms. The information in this handbook, if used in isolation, will not sufficiently prepare students for the CAPT or lifelong learning in literacy.

The Two Tests and Four Subtests

The Reading Across the Disciplines and Writing Across the Disciplines assessments are divided into four subtests: (1) Response to Literature, (2) Reading for Information, (3) Interdisciplinary Writing I and II, and (4) Editing and Revising. Response to Literature and Reading for Information assess a student’s ability to read and interact with works of fiction and nonfiction across all content areas. The CAPT reading goal is based on the combined Response to Literature (50 percent) and Reading for Information (50 percent) subtests. Interdisciplinary Writing I and II and Editing and Revising assess a student’s ability to write across all content areas. The CAPT writing goal is based on the combined Interdisciplinary Writing I (35 percent) and II (35 percent) and Editing and Revising (30 percent) subtests.

Response to Literature, Reading for Information

The Response to Literature and Reading for Information subtests, which are based on current research in literacy instruction and assessment, are designed on the theory that when a student reads textbook material and other nonfiction, poetry, drama, and fictional works, an interaction between that student and text occurs. The subtests also possess two overarching dimensions: types of texts and levels of interaction with those texts. These dimensions are based on research about the way a reader constructs meaning from a text; meaning does not reside solely within text, but is the result of the interaction between the reader and the text. Levels of interaction are: forming understanding, developing interpretation, making connections, and demonstrating critical stance. Levels of interaction should be seen as points on a continuum rather than separate categories. The subtests mirror the types of reading and writing students encounter in all disciplines at school and in life. Thus, it is through the coordinated efforts among all of the disciplines that a student will have an improved chance of succeeding on the Response to Literature and Reading for Information subtests.

Interdisciplinary Writing I and II, Editing and Revising

The Interdisciplinary Writing I and II and Editing and Revising subtests, which are also based on current research in literacy assessment, are designed on the belief that a student must be able to write for varied purposes and audiences. The three overarching purposes for writing are to: (1) express, (2) inform, and (3) persuade. The writing subtests identify the stages of the writing process leading to

the development of any piece of solid writing. These three stages include (1) generating ideas, (2) developing and clarifying ideas, and (3) proofreading, editing and revising. The subtests imply that both process and product are important to address during writing instruction. The subtests mirror the types of reading and writing students encounter in all disciplines at school and in life. Thus, as is the case with the Response to Literature and Reading for Information subtests, it is through the coordinated efforts among all of the disciplines that a student will have an improved chance of succeeding on the Interdisciplinary Writing I and II and Editing and Revising subtests.

Summary of Changes

There are two changes in the Reading Across the Disciplines and Writing Across the Disciplines assessment formats from the second to the third generations. The new Reading for Information subtest provides numbers at every other paragraph for ease of reference when responding to the questions, which did not exist in the second generation. The new Interdisciplinary Writing subtest offers two articles students read and respond to, whereas the second generation presented three articles.

Handbook Design

The *Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) Third Generation Handbook for Reading and Writing Across the Disciplines* provides overviews, content, design, scoring, rubrics, strategies and released items for each of the Reading Across the Disciplines and Writing Across the Disciplines four subtests: Response to Literature, Reading for Information, Interdisciplinary Writing I and II, and Editing and Revising.

Response to Literature (RtL)

Response to Literature assesses a student’s ability to independently read, thoroughly comprehend, and thoughtfully respond to one authentic fictional text through four open-ended questions in one 70-minute session.

RtL Content: Text

The one authentic fictional text has been published, and is 2,000-3,000 words in length and at a 10th-grade reading level. Every effort is made to ensure the fictional text is contemporary, multicultural, engaging, appropriate for statewide implementation, and void of any stereotyping or bias.

RtL Content: Questions

The four open-ended questions prompt a student to focus on four assessed dimensions in relationship to the fictional text read: (1) forming understanding, (2) developing interpretation, (3) making connections, and (4) demonstrating critical stance. These levels of interaction should be seen as points on a continuum rather than separate categories.

The four open-ended questions that appear in every Response to Literature assessment are:

Forming Understanding

- (1) What are your thoughts and questions about the story? You might reflect upon the characters, their problems, the title, or other ideas in the story.

Developing Interpretation

- (2) Choose one of the following quotations from the story. Explain what you think the quotation means as it relates to elements of the story such as the characters or the theme. (Page numbers from the text will be referenced for each of the three provided quotations.)

OR (*One or the other question appears on the test.*)

How does the main character change from the beginning of the story to the end? What do you think causes this change?

Making Connections

- (3) What does this story say about people in general? In what ways does it remind you of people you have known or experiences you have had? You may also write about stories or books you have read or movies, works of art, or television programs you have seen. Use examples from the story to explain your thinking.

Demonstrating Critical Stance

- (4) How successful was the author in creating a good piece of literature? Use examples from the story to explain your thinking.

When a student responds to the four open-ended questions, the student is expected to support each response with specific evidence from the text. For each question, a student is given one page on which to respond; however, the student is not required

RtL

- 70-minute session
- 1 published fictional text
- 2,000-3,000-word text
- 10th-grade readability
- 4 response questions
- 4 dimensions assessed
- 6-point rubric
- 2-12 score
- 50% of CAPT reading score

RtL

When a student responds to the open-ended questions, the student is expected to support each response with specific evidence from the text.

to fill the provided page. Scores are based on the quality of meeting the dimensions, not quantity of writing.

RtL Design

The first page of the test booklet includes an overview of the test and directions. The text font is 12-point, left-justified, and located on the left two-thirds of each page. Space for student reflection is provided on the right one-third of each page. There are four response pages in the answer document with one question and lines to respond on each page.

RtL Sample Released Items

[RtL sample released items](#) are located at the end of this handbook or may be obtained by contacting the CAPT English language arts coordinator in Assessment. Released items are also sent annually to district test coordinators.

RtL Scoring

Two readers independently and holistically score each student's Response to Literature responses. A student's responses are scored together, using a six-point scale. The score is based on a student's provided evidence of the four dimensions (forming understanding, developing interpretation, making connections, demonstrating critical stance). Grammar, spelling, and penmanship are not considered for scoring, but are important to the fluency and clarity of a response. With two readers, each using a six-point scoring rubric, each student will receive a combined score ranging from two to 12. This will count for 50 percent of the overall Reading Across the Disciplines score. The [RtL Rubric](#) is provided on the next page.

RtL Rubric

Each score category contains a range of student responses that reflect the descriptions given below.

Score Point 6

The response demonstrates:

- a basic understanding of the whole story; interpretation is perceptive and richly supported with examples from the text
- an exceptional ability to reflect, revise, reshape, and/or deepen initial understanding
- perceptive associations/connections between the text, other texts, and/or outside experiences; supports these connections with examples from the text
- perceptive judgments about the literary quality of the text; supports these judgments with examples from the text, other texts, and/or outside experiences

Score Point 5

The response demonstrates:

- a basic understanding of whole text; interpretation is thoughtful and well supported with examples from the text
- an acceptable ability to reflect, revise, reshape, and/or deepen initial understanding
- associations/connections between the text, other texts, and/or outside experience; generally supports these connections with examples from the text
- thoughtful judgments about the literary quality of the text, generally supports these judgments with examples from the text, other texts, and/or outside experiences

Score Point 4

The response demonstrates:

- a basic understanding of the whole text; a plausible interpretation is supported with some examples from the text
- some ability to reflect, revise, reshape, and/or deepen initial understanding
- some associations/connections between the text, other texts, and/or outside experience, may not be supported with examples from the text
- some judgments about the literary quality of the text; lacks depth and/or is not generally supported with examples from the text, other texts, and/or outside experiences

Score Point 3

The response demonstrates:

- some understanding of portions of the text or text as a whole; interpretation lacks insight and/or support from the text
- limited ability to reflect, revise, reshape, and/or deepen initial understanding
- an association/connection between the text, other texts, and/or outside experience, superficial, lacks depth and/or support
- judgments about the literary quality of the text; tends to be formulaic and/or lacks examples from the text, other texts, and/or outside experiences

Score Point 2

The response demonstrates:

- a literal or superficial understanding of portions of the text or the text as a whole
- little or no ability to reflect, revise, reshape, and/or deepen initial understanding
- difficulty in making or supporting an association/connection between the text, other texts, and/or outside experiences
- superficial or emotional judgments about the literary quality of the text or no support with examples from the text other texts, and/or outside experiences

Score Point 1

The response demonstrates:

- limited understanding and/or serious misunderstanding of portions of the text or the text as a whole
- little or no ability to reflect, revise, reshape, and/or deepen initial understanding
- no meaningful associations/connections between the text, other texts, and/or outside experiences
- no awareness of the literary quality of the text

Reading for Information (RfI)

Reading for Information assesses a student's ability to independently read, thoroughly comprehend, and thoughtfully respond to three authentic nonfiction texts through 12 multiple-choice and six open-ended questions in one 45-minute session. To succeed on this assessment, a student must use knowledge gained from his or her English language arts, fine and applied arts, health and physical education, mathematics, social studies, science, and technology courses.

RfI Content: Text

The three authentic nonfiction texts have been published, and are 500-1,000 words each in length and at a 10th-grade reading level. The texts represent varied content areas (e.g., newspaper, magazine, and online articles, journals, speeches, reports, summaries, interviews, memos, letters, reviews, government documents, workplace and consumer materials, and editorials). Every effort is made to ensure that the nonfiction texts are contemporary, multicultural, engaging, appropriate for statewide implementation, and void of any stereotyping or bias. Each text stands alone, but may include related maps, charts, graphs, and tables.

RfI

- 45-minute session
- 3 published nonfiction texts
- 500 -1,000-word texts
- 10th-grade readability
- 12 multiple-choice, 6 open-ended questions
- 2 dimensions assessed
- 3-point rubric (0-2)
- 0-24 score
- 50% of CAPT reading score

RfI Content: Questions

The 12 multiple-choice and six open-ended questions prompt a student to focus on two assessed dimensions in relationship to each text read: (1) developing interpretation and (2) demonstrating critical stance. Each article asks two developing interpretation multiple-choice questions, one developing interpretation open-ended question, two critical stance multiple-choice questions, and one critical stance open-ended question.

The 12 multiple-choice and six open-ended questions prompt a student to:

- make connections between the text and outside experiences and knowledge;
- identify or infer the author's use of structure and organizational patterns in the text;
- draw conclusions about the author's purpose in including or omitting specific details in the text;
- use evidence from the text to draw and/or support conclusions;
- use information from the text to make predictions;
- analyze the author's craft to include the use of literary devices in the text;
- evaluate explicit and implicit information and themes within the text;
- select, synthesize, and use relevant information within a the text to include in a response to or extension of the text, and
- demonstrate an awareness of values, customs, ethics, and beliefs included in the text.

The following are some of the multiple-choice and open-ended question stems that may appear in a Reading for Information assessment:

Make connections between the text, other texts, and outside experiences and knowledge

- The author does not say, but the reader can tell _.
- The author presumed the reader of this article already knew_.
- The article does not say, but suggests that _.
- Why did the author include _?
- In paragraph_, the author includes quotations from _ to show _.

Identify or infer the author's use of structure and organizational patterns in the text

- The bold headings in this article are used to _.
- The purpose of paragraph _, which begins...is to describe _.
- The structure of this article is used to _.
- Explain what you think is the probable purpose of the (chart/graphic).
- Explain why the author chose the quote by _ to begin/end this article/paragraph.

Draw conclusions about author's purpose, including/omitting specific details in the text

- The author included details about _ in order to _.
- The author probably wrote this article in order to _.
- Why did the author include these/this (quotation) in the article?
- Why did the author include paragraph _?
- Why was the chart about _ included in this article?

Use evidence from the text to draw/support conclusions

- The reader can tell from the article that _ deals with _ in all of the following areas except _.
- There is enough evidence in this article to conclude _.
- All of these conclusions can be drawn from the information in this article except _.
- Explain the impact _ has had on _.
- Explain what might be some of the advantages/disadvantages of _.

Use information from the text to make predictions

- The article suggests _ will probably continue due to _.
- What most likely happened after _?
- The article does not say, but suggest that _.
- Why do you think _ will not _ in the future?
- What will probably happen as a result of _?

Analyze the author's craft to include the use of literary devices in the text

- Why did the author include these/this (quotation) in the article?
- In the first paragraph, why does the author describe _?
- In the last paragraph, why did the author use the phrase _?
- How was the author able to show _?
- What arguments did the author use to try to convince the reader that _ is _?

Evaluate explicit and implicit information and themes within the text

- Which term is most important in understanding the key ideas in this article?
- According to the (chart/graph), what becomes the most important factor in _?
- The author's main reason for writing paragraph _ was to _.
- What are some of the specific actions the article implies readers should take?
- What arguments did the author use to try to convince the reader that _ is _?

Select, synthesize, and/or use relevant information within a text to include in a response to or extension of the text

- The author does not say, but the reader can tell _.
- The article does not say, but suggests _.
- What seems to be the best solution to the problem of _?
- What are some of the specific actions the article implies the reader should take?
- What possible effect could _ have on _?

Demonstrate an awareness of values, customs, ethics, and beliefs included in the text

- The author of this article probably wants the reader to appreciate _.
- The author’s attitude toward _ can best be described as _.
- Which of the following phrases provides evidence of the author’s bias?
- The author probably wrote this article to appeal to readers who _.
- With which statement would the author probably agree?

When a student responds to the six open-ended questions, the student is expected to explain his or her thinking and to support his or her response with specific evidence from the text. Including text-specific information can make the difference between a score one and a score two. For each question, a student is given seven lines on which to respond; however, he or she is not required to fill all of the provided lines. Scores are based on the quality of meeting the two dimensions, not quantity of writing.

Rfi

When a student responds to any of the open-ended questions, the student is expected to explain his or her thinking and to support his or her response with specific evidence from the text.

Rfi Design

The first page of the test booklet includes an overview of the test and directions. The texts’ fonts are 12-point, left-justified, and in two columns. The left column continues the full length of the page before the right column is started. Every other paragraph is numbered. The multiple-choice and open-ended questions follow the text. Multiple-choice answers must be bubbled, while open-ended answers must be written in a box with seven lines provided for each question.

Rfi Sample Released Items

[Rfi sample released items](#) are located at the end of this handbook or may be obtained by contacting the CAPT English language arts coordinator in Assessment. Released items are also sent annually to district test coordinators.

Rfi Scoring

Multiple-choice items are electronically scored. Readers independently and holistically score each student’s open-ended responses, using a three-point scale and basing the score on a student’s evidence of the two dimensions (developing interpretation and demonstrating critical stance). Grammar, spelling, and penmanship are not considered for scoring, but are important to the fluency and clarity of a response. With the 12 multiple-choice items, each valued at one-point, and six open-ended items, each valued at two points, each student will receive a score ranging from zero to 24. This will count for 50 percent of the overall Reading Across the Disciplines score. The [Rfi Rubric](#) is provided on the next page.

RfI Rubric

Each score category contains a range of student responses that reflect the descriptions given below.

Developing an Interpretation

Score Point 2

The response demonstrates:

- an exploration or development of the ideas presented in the text
- a strong conceptual understanding by the inclusion of specific relevant information from the text
- an extension of ideas that may include extensive and/or insightful inferences, connections between ideas in the text, and references to prior knowledge and/or experiences

Score Point 1

The response demonstrates:

- some exploration or development of ideas presented in the text
- a fundamental understanding by the inclusion of some relevant information from the text
- an extension of ideas that lacks depth, although may include some inferences, connections between ideas in the text, or references to prior knowledge and/or experiences

Score Point 0

The response demonstrates:

- limited or no exploration or development of ideas presented in the text
- limited or no understanding of the text, may be illogical, vague, or irrelevant
- possible incomplete or limited inferences, connections between ideas in the text, or references to prior knowledge and/or experiences

Demonstrating a Critical Stance

Score Point 2

The response demonstrates:

- a thoughtful and thorough examination of the text, uses information to move beyond the boundaries of the text
- possible consideration of how, why or for whom the text was written
- an ability to evaluate explicit and implicit information and/or makes insightful judgments about the text
- possible evaluation of the author's craft, including literary devices and/or a projection of the implications raised

Score Point 1

The response demonstrates:

- sufficient, though limited, examination of the text, some attempt to use information to move beyond the boundaries of the text
- possible consideration of how, why, or for whom the text was written
- some ability to evaluate explicit and implicit information and/or makes plausible judgments about the text
- possible evaluation of the author's craft, including literary devices and/or a projection of the implications raised

Score Point 0

The response demonstrates:

- a cursory examination of the text, does not move beyond the boundaries of the text
- little or no consideration of how, why, or for whom the text was written
- little or no ability to evaluate explicit and implicit information and/or makes superficial judgments about the text, the author's craft, including literary devices and/or a projection of the implications raised
- possible simplistic, unsupported, illogical, vague, and/or irrelevant information

Interdisciplinary Writing (IW)

Interdisciplinary Writing I and II assess a student's ability to independently read, thoroughly comprehend, and thoughtfully respond to two authentic nonfiction texts through one open-ended task per each 65-minute session. This assessment is comprised of two sessions. Additionally, the writing tests assess a student's ability to think critically, take a stance, solve problems, make informed decisions to formulate an argument, and persuasively communicate ideas to a specific audience. To succeed on this assessment, a student must use knowledge gained from the student's English language arts, fine and applied arts, health and physical education, mathematics, social studies, science, and technology courses.

IW

- 2 65-minute sessions
- 2 published nonfiction texts per session
- 700 -1,000-word texts
- 10th-grade readability
- 1 open-ended task per session
- 5 dimensions assessed
- 6-point rubric
- 2-12 score per session
- 70% of CAPT writing score
(35% Session I & 35% Session II)

Content: Text

The authentic nonfiction texts have been published and are informational and persuasive, 700-1,000 words each in length, and at a 10th-grade reading level. The texts represent varied content areas (e.g., newspaper, magazine, and online articles, journals, speeches, reports, summaries, interviews, memos, letters, reviews, government documents, workplace and consumer materials, and editorials). The texts support both the pro and con side of the introduced issue. Every effort is made to ensure the nonfiction texts are contemporary, multicultural, engaging, appropriate for statewide implementation, and void of any stereotyping or bias. Each text may include corresponding maps, charts, graphs, and tables.

IW Question

For each test, a student must respond to one task, composed of a contemporary issue with two sources representing pro/con perspectives on the issue. The task requires a student to take a position on the issue, either pro or con. A student must support his or her position with information from both sources. A student, for example, may be asked to draft a letter to his or her congressperson, prepare an editorial for a newspaper, or attempt to persuade a particular audience to adopt a particular position. The task assesses a student's ability to respond to five assessed dimensions in relationship to the nonfiction text: (1) take a clear position on the issue, (2) support the position with accurate and relevant information from the source materials, (3) use information from all of the source materials, (4) organize ideas logically and effectively, and (5) express ideas in one's own words with clarity and fluency.

When a student responds to the task, the student is expected to support his or her position with specific evidence from the text. For each task, a student is given three pages on which to respond; however, he or she is not required to fill all of the provided pages. Scores are based on the quality of meeting the five dimensions, not quantity of writing.

IW

When a student responds to the open-ended questions, the student is expected to support each response with specific evidence from the text.

IW Design

The first pages of the test booklet include an overview of the test and directions in the following format: Overview (purpose of the interdisciplinary writing assessments), About this Test (an introduction to the topic), The Issue (a brief description of the two sides of the issue), Your Task (a description of the steps to be followed – read the source materials, prepare to write, and write in the answer booklet), Your Score (describes the scoring), and Organizing Your Time (describes how to best make use of time). Furthermore, each test includes graphic organizers, one pro and one con, and one page of scratch paper for notes. The booklet layout includes facing pages. The texts' fonts are 12-point, left-justified, and in two columns. The left column continues the full length of the page before the right column is started. Three response pages are provided in the document.

IW Sample Released Items

[IW sample released items](#) are located at the end of this handbook or may be obtained by contacting the CAPT English language arts coordinator in Assessment. Released items are also sent annually to district test coordinators.

IW Scoring

Two readers independently and holistically score each student's Interdisciplinary Writing responses. The two responses are scored separately, using a six-point scale, the scores are based on a student's evidence of the five dimensions (takes a clear position on the issue, supports the position with accurate and relevant information from the source materials, uses information from all of the source materials, organizes ideas logically and effectively, and expresses ideas in own words with clarity and fluency). Grammar, spelling, and penmanship are not considered for scoring, but are important to the fluency and clarity of a response. With two readers each using a six-point scoring rubric, each student will receive a combined score ranging from two to 12 on each IW session. This will count for 70 percent (35 percent for IW I and 35 percent for IW II) of the overall Writing Across the Disciplines score. The [IW Rubric](#) is provided on the next page.

IW Rubric

Each score category contains a range of student responses that reflect the descriptions given below.

Score Point 6

The response demonstrates:

- a clear, thoughtful, and persuasive position; keen awareness of audience is shown
- a richly supported position with information from both of the source materials
- very well-developed supporting ideas; information is accurate and relevant
- a unified and focused response that contains one or more clear controlling ideas; organization and control are sustained throughout
- clearly and effectively developed ideas; writing is fluent and polished with effective transitions

Score Point 5

The response demonstrates:

- a clear and persuasive position; awareness of audience is shown
- a well-supported position, typically using information from both of the source materials
- generally well-developed supporting ideas; information is accurate and relevant
- a well-organized response that contains one or more controlling ideas; digressions are rare
- mostly clearly expressed ideas; writing is generally fluent, with some use of transitions

Score Point 4

The response demonstrates:

- a developed position; some awareness of audience is shown, but persuasiveness may be lacking
- adequate support, but may not use information from both of the source materials
- adequately but not thoroughly developed supporting ideas; some information may be inaccurate or irrelevant
- adequately organized response with at least one controlling idea; digressions, if present, are not disruptive
- mostly clear and understandable ideas, but fluency and transitions may be lacking

Score Point 3

The response demonstrates:

- a position, but the position may not be clearly developed; some awareness of audience may be shown
- limited support, but may not use information from both of the source materials
- few and/or only somewhat developed supporting ideas; some information may be inaccurate or irrelevant
- a somewhat organized response, but there may digressions or abrupt shifts that interfere with meaning
- some ideas that may not be clearly expressed; fluency and transitions may be lacking

Score Point 2

The response demonstrates:

- a possible position that addresses the problem; little or no audience awareness is shown
- a response that contains only superficial support and/or may use information from only one of the source materials
- possible poorly developed and/or illogical or inconsistent supporting ideas; information may be inaccurate/irrelevant
- a possible lack of focus and controlling idea; digressions and/or abrupt shifts in the response may interfere with meaning
- some ideas that may be difficult to understand; fluency and transitions are lacking

Score Point 1

The response demonstrates:

- a possible position that addresses the problem; little or no awareness of audience is shown
- little or no support from the source materials, OR the support provided is copied verbatim
- emotional, inaccurate, irrelevant support, OR shows serious misunderstanding
- a lack of focus and controlling idea; little or no organization is present, frequent digressions and/or abrupt shifts in the response interfere with meaning
- many ideas that are difficult to understand; fluency and transitions are lacking

Editing and Revising (E&R)

Editing and Revising assesses a student's ability to independently apply an understanding of standard English conventions by proofreading four passages and identifying corrections that need to be made through 24 multiple-choice questions in one 25-minute session.

E&R Content: Text

Three non-published texts, 255-325 words in length, and at a 10th-grade reading level are used. The texts, representing fiction and nonfiction, are in the form of: transactional/informational writing (e.g., report, summary, speech, interview, letter); expressive/personal writing (e.g., personal essay), and descriptive/imaginative writing (e.g., expository writing using figurative language).

A brief introductory scenario precedes each of the texts.

The texts includes embedded errors. The texts, although not published, are representative of the types of writing a student would complete in school or as part of her/his daily life. Embedded errors are typical of the varieties of errors a student is likely to make and should know how to correct. Every effort is made to ensure the texts are contemporary, multicultural, engaging, appropriate for statewide implementation, and void of any stereotyping or bias.

E&R Content: Questions

The 24 multiple-choice questions prompt a student to correct embedded errors. A student must also determine the possibility of no errors being present in a sentence. There are six questions per passage. The questions center on editing and revising. Editing focuses on capitalization, punctuation, usage and spelling. Revising focuses on content, organization, tone, syntax and word choice.

E&R Design

The first page of the test booklet includes an overview of the test and directions. The texts' fonts are 12-point, double-spaced, left-justified, and numbered along the left-hand side. The passage text appears on the left page, while the items appear in two columns on the right page. When it is necessary to review a sentence in context in order to correctly respond to a question, the stem will include a reference to the line of text and the first and last word of the sentence. When a question can be correctly answered by reviewing one sentence in isolation, the sentence will be reproduced as part of the question so the student does not need to search for the sentence within the passage. Student responses are bubbled.

E&R Sample Released Items

[E&R sample released items](http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/capt/released_items.htm) are located at the end of this handbook and online at http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/capt/released_items.htm. Released items are also sent annually to district test coordinators.

E&R Scoring

Multiple-choice items are electronically scored as correct or incorrect. Only 18 of the 24 questions are used in determining a student's score, while the others are used for research purposes. With 18 scored items valued at one point each, a student will receive a score ranging from zero to 18. This will count for 30 percent of the overall Writing Across All Content Areas score.

E&R

- 25-minute session
- 4 passages
- 255-325-word texts
- 10th-grade readability
- 24 multiple-choice questions (6 per passage, 18 scored)
- 0-18 score
- 30% of CAPT writing score

Instructional Strategies to Use All Year

A student's success on the CAPT does not occur by teaching to the test; but rather, a student's success on the CAPT is a direct result of every educator's integration of the assessed skills into daily lessons throughout the years.

Create a Climate for Learning

All teachers should provide a climate that emphasizes all students can learn. Support every student physically, emotionally, socially, cognitively and ethically. Lead all students by applying research about learning styles, multiple intelligences, and about diversified instruction for the unique learning needs of all students (e.g., special education, gifted and talented, and every level in between). Lead all students through motivation and self-direction, and provide a positive classroom environment that fosters creative thinking, problem solving, academic risk-taking and independent learning.

Vary Student Text Exposure

All teachers must offer a balanced range of texts with which all students can interact.

- Provide a balance of fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary, assigned and choice, difficult and easy, long and short, and secondary and primary texts.
- Provide a range of fictional "texts" (e.g., anthologies, art work, movie clips, novels, novellas, picture books, plays, poems, short stories, song lyrics, television clips, vignettes) with varied genres (e.g., historical fiction; humor; mystery; myths, legends and fairytales; romance; science fiction and fantasy; horror, suspense and thrillers; westerns).
- Provide a range of nonfiction "texts" (e.g., newspaper, magazine, and online articles; autobiographies; biographies; charts; consumer documents; contracts; documentaries; drawings; editorials; essays; graphics; graphs; interviews; journals; lectures; legal documents; letters; maps; memoirs; memos; narrated nonfiction; photographs; quotes; reference books; reports; reviews; speeches; summaries; travelogues; workplace documents).
- Provide a range of "texts" that consider diversity (e.g., age, disability, ethnicity, family background, health, lifestyle, nationality, native language, parental status, physical appearance, profession, race, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status).
- Provide a range of texts for students of varying reading levels (e.g., special education, gifted and talented, English language learners) and interests, skills and talents.
- Provide opportunities for students to interact with one another around a variety of texts.

Vary the Way Students Work

In most careers, people do not work in isolation. It is important, therefore, for all teachers to structure their classrooms so students have opportunities to work in groups or teams. This will provide a more authentic experience. Opportunities to work collaboratively encourage students to

share responsibility for learning. Students listen and talk, develop approaches and explanations, argue and persuade. They learn to order their thoughts and compare their own thinking processes with those of their peers. They review each others work and provide constructive feedback. Students also become involved in tutoring and encouraging each other. When students work collaboratively, they all have a chance to be successful.

Foster Independent Reading

All teachers must model enthusiasm for reading, which in turn will foster independence. Encourage students to set appropriate goals for their own reading, and support students so they can achieve those goals. Ensure reading materials are at a student's independent or instructional level, yet provide them with advanced materials to foster academic risk-taking and creative thinking. Demonstrate connections between reading and writing.

Strengthen Comprehension for Content Area Text

All teachers must lead all students by providing direct, explicit instruction in reading and writing skills specific to their subject area, and by English language arts teachers providing direct, explicit instruction in reading and writing skills with content-area texts. Teachers must model a variety of strategies proficient readers use to understand what they read. Students must use appropriate self-selected strategies to assist with their understanding of content-area text.

Before engaging with a text, students must examine headings, subheadings, bold/italic embedded words, captions, graphs, charts and pictures that may accompany the text in an effort to activate prior knowledge, generate predictions, and establish connections and purposes for reading the text.

During reading, students must question and be able to answer their questions (e.g., What is my understanding about my reading? How does the new information I am learning relate to what I already know? Why is the author including these specific words? Is there an underlying message the author is trying to communicate? From what perspective is the author coming? How is the information relevant to the authors' purpose? What is the most important aspect of what I am learning and why is it important? What additional questions do I have about what I am reading?). During reading, students may use varied strategies to assist them with understanding difficult text (e.g., re-reading portions; re-examining the accompanying charts, graphs and pictures; re-examining vocabulary; asking another for clarification; using Post-it notes with their questioning and answering).

After reading, students must be asked to respond to the text in varied ways appropriate to the task (e.g., open-ended verbal and written questions posed by the teacher, other students, and themselves). Students must support all responses, verbal and written, with specific evidence from the text. Teachers must sustain the habit of requiring students to look back in the text for specific evidence. The goal is to move students toward learning independently regardless of the content area. Teachers must support the process by which students use appropriate self-selected strategies to assist with their understanding of content area text.

Practice Effective Questioning

Engage students regularly in thinking about text through the use of questioning. Questioning is an effective strategy to move classroom instruction from teacher centered to student centered. A simple

“Why?” or “What do you think about that?” or “Can you tell me more?” or “How do you know?” or “Can you explain how you arrived at your answer?” form the basis of a lesson that goes beyond merely searching for the correct answer. Students who can explain their answers often have stronger understandings and it gives students important opportunities to communicate those understandings. Furthermore, varied questioning provides educators with powerful tools to assess the degree of student understanding. Classrooms in which students regularly explain how and why, whether in whole-class or small-group discussions or in individual written responses, are classrooms that effectively prepare students for many of the CAPT open-ended items. Use engaging guiding questions to capture student interest and facilitate learning in the content area.

Build Connections

All teachers must lead all students to make and apply connections within and across disciplines, to other texts, to their own experiences, and the outside world. Connections lead students to develop a deeper understanding of the content and provide greater opportunities for retention of information. Vertical and interdisciplinary articulation of curricula will help teachers identify the connections within and between disciplines to begin to plan instruction accordingly. Pose questions relevant to the world in which the students live. Ensure learning is relevant to the content area.

Foster Independent Writing through Critical Thinking, Taking and Supporting a Position

All teachers must model enthusiasm for writing, which in turn will foster independence. Demonstrate connections between reading and writing. Teach students how to take a stance about a thought-provoking question and support that stance with evidence from literature. Encourage students to set appropriate goals for their own writing, and support students so they can achieve those goals. Teach students how to write using informal, narrative, expository, and persuasive organizational patterns. Teach students how to write creatively. Provide clear, specific, constructive feedback to student work. Provide opportunities for students to write and publish for varied purposes and audiences. Incorporate technology.

Use Common Assessments and Rubrics Within and Across All Disciplines

Teachers should collaborate to develop common, varied formative and summative assessments and common rubrics within and across disciplines. Consistent, rigorous performance opportunities communicate clear expectations for all students, regardless of the teacher or the course section. Common formative and summative assessments and common rubrics allow teachers to identify student strengths and weaknesses within and across all disciplines. Teachers should regularly collaborate with cross-discipline colleagues on teams that analyze all students’ work. The use of common formative and summative assessments and common rubrics serve as an important tool to focus teachers on processes, skills and gaps in student understanding that are addressed through re-teaching and re-assessment.

Allow Time for Students to Examine the CAPT Handbooks

Provide students with time to examine the CAPT handbooks for science, mathematics and reading and writing across the disciplines, especially the “Strategies for Independent Students” section. Share with them the released items for each area found in this handbook and online at the CSDE website: http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/capt/released_items.htm.

CAPT Strategies for All Students

- Take the testing process seriously.
- Know that testing sessions are important, but also are only a “snapshot” of your overall ability as a student in the spring of 10th-grade.
- Get ample sleep each night of the testing.
- Eat a light, healthy breakfast each day of the testing.
- Take deep breaths to remain relaxed during the testing.
- Pace yourself with each of the tests; do not rush, yet remain aware of the testing time window.
- Examine the handbooks and other provided materials.
- When testing and engaging with any of the texts, use those skills your teachers taught you over the years about reading and writing across the disciplines.

Prior to reading

- review the questions asked so those questions are fresh in your mind as you read, and
- examine the title, author, and accompanying charts, graphs, pictures so you can begin to pose questions in your mind about the text.

During reading

- ask yourself [questions](#), and
- **highlight** or underline in the provided text or jot notes in the provided space alongside the text. When reading the interdisciplinary writing articles, use two different highlighter colors, one for the pro and one for the con sides of the issue. (These strategies may assist you in saving time and identifying support when you respond to and provide support to successfully answer the questions.).

After Reading

- re-read portions of the text for information you did not fully comprehend;
- re-examine title, author, and accompanying charts, graphs, pictures;
- re-examine the questions;
- examine your highlights, underlines, and notes, and
- carefully re-read the questions and think about what is being asked.

When Writing

- write with organization and fluency;
- write with audience in mind;
- answer all parts of the question;
- support each response with specific evidence from each of the texts, and
- ask yourself [questions](#).

Strategies for Independent Students: Questions to Ask Yourself While Reading

	Forming Understanding	Developing Interpretation & Making Connections	Demonstrating Critical Stance
	Requires you to give an initial reaction to the text and describe its general content and purpose	Requires you to explain and/or interpret the text, and connect the text to personal knowledge	Requires you to reflect on the text and make judgments about its quality and meaning
Reading Literary Material	<p>What happens in this story?</p> <p>Who is this story about?</p> <p>What is the problem/conflict in this story?</p> <p>How would I describe the main character?</p> <p>What was my first reaction to this story?</p>	<p>How did the plot develop?</p> <p>How did the main character change in this story?</p> <p>How is this story similar to experiences I have had?</p> <p>What does this story mean to me?</p>	<p>How does this story remind me of other works I have read?</p> <p>What devices did the author use to make an impact on the reader?</p> <p>What do I hear this writer saying about human nature?</p> <p>Should this story be considered "good" literature? Why or why not?</p>
Reading Informational Material	<p>What is the selection about?</p> <p>What did I learn from this selection?</p> <p>How did the author organize his or her ideas?</p>	<p>How do the ideas in this selection relate to what I know about this topic?</p> <p>What are the major causes of the problem?</p> <p>What solution is most promising based on the evidence?</p>	<p>Are the ideas in this selection important? Why or why not?</p> <p>How effectively did the author communicate his or her ideas?</p> <p>How could I use information from this selection?</p>
Reading Persuasive Material	<p>What was the author's purpose in writing this selection?</p> <p>What message is this author sending?</p> <p>How does the author feel about this topic?</p>	<p>Has the author supported his or her arguments?</p> <p>Is the author's reasoning logical or emotional?</p> <p>How do the author's views on this topic compare to those of other authors I have read?</p>	<p>What techniques did the author use to persuade the reader?</p> <p>Who would be persuaded by this author? Who would not be persuaded?</p> <p>Why should readers believe or not believe this author?</p>

Strategies for Independent Students: Questions to Ask Yourself While Writing

Generating Ideas	Developing & Clarifying Ideas	Proofreading, Editing, and Revising
<p>Requires you to select and limit topics, draw upon personal knowledge as well as other sources, set purposes and define your audience</p>	<p>Requires you to develop, clarify, organize, and support ideas; to rethink your writing; to make changes to improve content and form</p>	<p>Requires you to assess a piece of writing in terms of accepted standards for paragraphing, sentence structure, and the mechanics of written standard English</p>
<p>What do I know about the topic?</p> <p>Who is my audience and what do they know about this topic?</p> <p>What do I want to accomplish with this piece of writing?</p> <p>How should I organize my ideas?</p> <p>Have I tried various strategies for generating ideas?</p>	<p>Will my audience understand my ideas?</p> <p>Have I expressed my ideas clearly?</p> <p>Have I used words that are clear and expressive?</p> <p>Have I fully developed and explained my ideas?</p> <p>Have I supported the points I'm trying to make?</p> <p>How can I improve this piece?</p> <p>How can I organize my ideas effectively?</p> <p>Are there new ideas I might include?</p> <p>Are the length and structure of my sentences appropriate for my purpose?</p> <p>Have I accomplished what I set out to do?</p>	<p>Have I written in complete sentences?</p> <p>Have I inserted paragraphs where they belong?</p> <p>Have I used proper sentence construction?</p> <p>Have I used appropriate transition words or phrases to complete a logical progression of ideas?</p> <p>Have I written with fluency?</p> <p>Can I clarify the meaning of a sentence by selecting a word or phrase that is more clear, precise or logical?</p> <p>Have I employed correct grammar and spelling, and used clear penmanship (although not graded)?</p>

Additional Assessment Information

Several Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) publications and resources are available through the CSDE website: www.state.ct.us/sde. Documents are regularly updated.

Curriculum Frameworks

<http://www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/curriculum/index.htm>

- All Disciplines (Grades PK-12)

State Testing

<http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/index.htm>

- Connecticut Mastery Test (Grades 3-8)
<http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/cmt/index.htm>
- Connecticut Academic Performance Test (Grade 10)
<http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/capt/index.htm>

National Testing

<http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/national/index.htm>

- Advanced Placement (AP)
<http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/national/ap.htm>
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)
<http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/national/naep.htm>
- Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)
<http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/national/psat.htm>
- Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)
<http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/national/sat.htm>
- Third International Math and Science Study (TIMMS)
<http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/national/timms.htm>

No Child Left Behind

<http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/nclb/index.htm>

Sample Released Items

- [Response to Literature](#)
- [Reading for Information](#)
- [Interdisciplinary Writing](#)
- [Editing and Revising](#)

Response to Literature Sample Released Items

To Come Once Permission from the Stories' Publishers is Granted

Reading for Information Sample Released Items

To Come Once Permission from the Articles' Publishers is Granted

Interdisciplinary Writing Sample Released Item

To Come Once Permission from the Articles' Publishers is Granted

Editing and Revising Sample Released Items

Past years' Editing and Revising sample released items can be located at:

http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/capt/released_items.htm

CAPT Editing & Revising Items

A composition teacher has asked Jamie to write a comparison/contrast essay for class. Read the essay and answer the multiple-choice questions that follow.

1 The tires crunch on the familiar gravel road, and we drive up to the little registration hut. Dad
2 goes in to choose a site, comes back and announces, "Got a great one!" Then we wind our way
3 through the campground to the thirty by sixty plot that will be home for a week.

4 We have camped here every year since I was four. In those days it was the greatest place in
5 the whole world. I loved waking to the sound of the birds. I also loved racing out of the tent in my
6 pajamas, feeling the earth between my bare toes. There was so much to do. I could hike, meet
7 new friends at the playground or add exotic varieties of insects to my collection. We'd eat only
8 what we could cook over the fire, and Mom never made me shower because I'd get clean in the
9 lake. The water was crystal clear and smooth as a mirror. The day ended at the campfire, then it
10 was into the warm tent, with Mom and Dad as close as the next sleeping bag.

11 Now I dread the camping trip. I have to share a stuffy tent with my parents; and I don't know
12 how they expect me to sleep in a sleeping bag. The campground is so noisy that I wake up early.
13 As I go to the showers, I see people at there campsites who haven't even gotten dressed yet. The
14 showers are so gross I can't stand to use them, even though theres dirt everywhere on me.
15 Sometimes I shower anyway to get rid of the sticky feel of the spray that doesn't keep the bugs
16 away. I have to wait in line just to freeze through a cold shower in a wooden stall, but it beats
17 standing ankle-deep in muck in the dirty lake. I miss my friends, and there's nothing to do here. I'd
18 give anything for a burger and fries.

19 This used to be such a great place. I just don't know what happened.

CAPT Editing & Revising Items

Mark your answers to these questions in your answer booklet.

1. What is the **best** way to combine the two sentences in **lines 5–6** (*I loved ... toes.*)?
 - a. I also loved waking to the sound of the birds, I also loved racing out of the tent in my pajamas, feeling the earth between my bare toes.
 - b. I loved waking to the sound of the birds; racing out of the tent in my pajamas, feeling the earth between my toes.
 - c. I loved waking to the sounding of the birds, as well as racing out of the tent in my pajamas, and, finally, feeling the earth between my bare toes.
 - d. I loved waking to the sound of the birds and racing out of the tent in my pajamas, feeling the earth between my bare toes. Ⓢ

2. What is the **best** change, if any, to make in the sentence in **lines 7–9** (*We'd ... lake.*)?
 - f. Change *We'd eat only* to **We eat only**.
 - g. Change *Mom* to **mom**.
 - h. Change *lake* to **Lake**.
 - j. Make no change. Ⓢ

3. What is the **best** change, if any, to make in the sentence in **lines 11–12** (*I ... bag.*)?
 - a. Change *have* to **had**.
 - b. Change the semicolon to a comma. Ⓢ
 - c. Change *they* to **you**.
 - d. Make no change.

4. What is the **best** change, if any, to make in the sentence in **line 13** (*As ... yet.*)?
 - f. Delete the comma after *showers*.
 - g. Change *there* to **their**. Ⓢ
 - h. Change *gotten* to **got**.
 - j. Make no change.

5. What is the **best** change, if any, to make in the sentence in **lines 13–14** (*The showers ... everywhere on me.*)?
 - a. Insert a comma after *gross*.
 - b. Delete the comma after *them*.
 - c. Change *theres* to **there's**. Ⓢ
 - d. Make no change.

6. In the sentence in **lines 16–17** (*I ... lake.*), Jamie wants to change the word *freeze*. Which of these is the **best** change for Jamie to make?
 - f. be cold
 - g. shiver Ⓢ
 - h. endure
 - j. chill