

# Teachers of Tomorrow Science of Teaching Reading (STR) Practice Exam (Sample)

## Study Guide



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## **Questions**

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- 1. What is the most effective activity for addressing challenges posed by simple homographs for English learners?**
  - A. Pairing students for reading practice**
  - B. Creating multiple-meaning word webs with illustrations**
  - C. Conducting silent reading sessions**
  - D. Implementing vocabulary flashcards**
- 2. What assessment tools can best help determine if students are making progress in their retelling skills?**
  - A. Standardized tests scored by outside assessors.**
  - B. A rubric for oral retellings and an observational checklist.**
  - C. Peer feedback forms and group discussions on stories.**
  - D. A single test at the end of the unit.**
- 3. How do contextual clues assist readers with vocabulary?**
  - A. By providing dictionary definitions**
  - B. By offering examples of usage**
  - C. By helping infer meanings through surrounding text**
  - D. By simplifying language structures**
- 4. What intervention should be implemented for students who fall below the 25th percentile in fluency assessments?**
  - A. Increased silent reading time**
  - B. Providing targeted instruction to improve decoding accuracy and automaticity**
  - C. Assigning summer reading programs**
  - D. Reducing homework load**
- 5. What conclusion can the teacher draw from anecdotal notes indicating a student uses a range of strategies to learn content-specific vocabulary?**
  - A. The student struggles with all academic vocabulary**
  - B. The student is making progress in academic-vocabulary development**
  - C. The student prefers only informal learning methods**
  - D. The student does not understand Tier Two vocabulary**

- 6. Which qualitative dimension of a text can make it more challenging for students to read?**
- A. Use of simple sentence structures**
  - B. Frequent use of figurative language**
  - C. Inclusion of familiar topics**
  - D. Limited vocabulary variety**
- 7. What are thematic units in reading instruction?**
- A. Units focusing solely on vocabulary development**
  - B. Units that integrate multiple subjects around a central theme**
  - C. Units that exclusively teach fiction**
  - D. Units with no connections to student interests**
- 8. Which vocabulary activity is suitable for preschool-aged children based on a story they heard?**
- A. Creating their own storybook based on the narrative**
  - B. Having discussions about character motives**
  - C. Engaging in rhyme recognition with book vocabulary**
  - D. Counting character appearances in the story**
- 9. Which of the following is an effective strategy for supporting struggling readers?**
- A. Encouraging independent reading only**
  - B. Using differentiated instruction and targeted interventions**
  - C. Assigning larger reading assignments**
  - D. Focusing solely on phonics**
- 10. Which extension activity would best support gifted and talented students in learning new vocabulary words?**
- A. Creating their own analogies for the vocabulary words**
  - B. Conducting group discussions about the words**
  - C. Writing sentences using the words**
  - D. Drawing pictures representing the words**

## **Answers**

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- 1. B**
- 2. B**
- 3. C**
- 4. B**
- 5. B**
- 6. B**
- 7. B**
- 8. C**
- 9. B**
- 10. A**

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## **Explanations**

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**1. What is the most effective activity for addressing challenges posed by simple homographs for English learners?**

- A. Pairing students for reading practice**
- B. Creating multiple-meaning word webs with illustrations**
- C. Conducting silent reading sessions**
- D. Implementing vocabulary flashcards**

Creating multiple-meaning word webs with illustrations is particularly effective for addressing challenges posed by simple homographs for English learners because it engages students in a visual and contextual exploration of words that have multiple meanings. Homographs, which are words that are spelled the same but have different meanings, can be challenging for learners, especially those who are not yet fluent in English. By using word webs, educators can encourage students to brainstorm and connect different meanings and uses of a homograph, making the learning process more interactive and meaningful. Illustrations can enhance understanding further by providing visual cues that represent different meanings, which aids in comprehension and retention. This strategy caters to diverse learning styles, particularly for visual learners, and promotes deeper cognitive processing of the vocabulary. The other activities have their benefits but may not address the complexities of homographs as effectively. For example, pairing students for reading practice or conducting silent reading sessions may promote fluency and comprehension but might not specifically focus on the nuances of words that can confuse learners. Implementing vocabulary flashcards can be helpful for memorization but lacks the depth and contextual understanding that creating word webs provides.

**2. What assessment tools can best help determine if students are making progress in their retelling skills?**

- A. Standardized tests scored by outside assessors.**
- B. A rubric for oral retellings and an observational checklist.**
- C. Peer feedback forms and group discussions on stories.**
- D. A single test at the end of the unit.**

Using a rubric for oral retellings along with an observational checklist provides a structured and clear method for assessing students' progress in their retelling skills. The rubric establishes specific criteria for evaluating various aspects of retellings, such as comprehension, organization, and storytelling techniques. This allows educators to identify strengths and areas that need improvement for each student. Additionally, the observational checklist complements the rubric by allowing teachers to note specific behaviors and responses during the retelling process. This dual approach not only makes the assessment more comprehensive but also aligns closely with formative assessment practices, enabling frequent evaluation of student progress over time. By focusing on individual retelling performances rather than relying on standardized tests or end-of-unit assessments, educators gain detailed insights into students' evolving abilities, which can inform future instruction and interventions.

### 3. How do contextual clues assist readers with vocabulary?

- A. By providing dictionary definitions
- B. By offering examples of usage
- C. By helping infer meanings through surrounding text**
- D. By simplifying language structures

Contextual clues are essential in aiding readers with vocabulary because they help infer meanings through surrounding text. When readers encounter unknown words, they can rely on the context in which the words are placed—including nearby sentences, phrases, or even the overall theme of the passage—to deduce the meanings. This process aligns closely with how language is used naturally, as the meaning of words often becomes clear based on the way they fit within the context of a conversation or text. For example, if a reader sees a sentence that states, "The arboreal creatures are skilled at climbing and often build their nests in tall trees," the word "arboreal" can be understood as relating to trees, thanks to the surrounding information about climbing and trees. Such contextual cues enable readers to build their vocabulary organically, enhancing comprehension and retention. In contrast, other options do not provide the same level of assistance in understanding vocabulary. Providing dictionary definitions offers a direct meaning but doesn't support the reader in deducing meanings through contextual understanding, which promotes deeper learning. Offering examples of usage can be helpful, but it doesn't engage the reader in the same inferential thinking process stemming from the context. Simplifying language structures might make texts easier to read but doesn't directly enhance the reader's vocabulary comprehension.

### 4. What intervention should be implemented for students who fall below the 25th percentile in fluency assessments?

- A. Increased silent reading time
- B. Providing targeted instruction to improve decoding accuracy and automaticity**
- C. Assigning summer reading programs
- D. Reducing homework load

For students who fall below the 25th percentile in fluency assessments, providing targeted instruction to improve decoding accuracy and automaticity is essential. This intervention specifically addresses the foundational skills necessary for reading fluently. Decoding is the ability to accurately interpret written words, and automaticity refers to the speed and accuracy of reading without overt mental effort. When students struggle with fluency, it can often be traced back to challenges in decoding. By offering focused instruction that hones these skills, educators can help students become more proficient readers. This targeted approach enables students to read more smoothly, understand the text better, and ultimately perform better in fluency assessments. The other options, while they may contribute positively to reading development in general, do not specifically address the immediate needs of students who are significantly behind in fluency. Increased silent reading time may not be effective if students lack the skills to comprehend what they are reading. Assigning summer reading programs can be beneficial, but the lack of immediate skill improvement may not help students who are struggling right now. Reducing homework load does not directly support the development of reading fluency and skills. Hence, targeted instruction is the most appropriate and effective intervention in this context.

**5. What conclusion can the teacher draw from anecdotal notes indicating a student uses a range of strategies to learn content-specific vocabulary?**

- A. The student struggles with all academic vocabulary**
- B. The student is making progress in academic-vocabulary development**
- C. The student prefers only informal learning methods**
- D. The student does not understand Tier Two vocabulary**

The conclusion that the teacher can draw from anecdotal notes indicating a student uses a range of strategies to learn content-specific vocabulary is that the student is making progress in academic-vocabulary development. This observation suggests that the student is actively engaging with the vocabulary and employing different methods to understand and incorporate it into their learning. Utilizing a variety of strategies often indicates that the student is not only trying to grasp the vocabulary but also is willing to adapt and find ways that work best for their learning style. This adaptability is a sign of growth and effort in mastering academic language, which is essential for success across subject areas. Recognizing this progress can encourage the teacher to continue supporting the student's learning journey.

**6. Which qualitative dimension of a text can make it more challenging for students to read?**

- A. Use of simple sentence structures**
- B. Frequent use of figurative language**
- C. Inclusion of familiar topics**
- D. Limited vocabulary variety**

The use of figurative language in a text can significantly increase its complexity for students. Figurative language, such as metaphors, similes, idioms, and other forms of expressions that convey meanings beyond the literal interpretation of words, often requires readers to make inferences and understand nuances that may not be immediately clear. This can pose challenges, especially for younger readers or those who are still developing their reading comprehension skills. Figurative language can create rich imagery and enhance the text's emotional impact, but it also relies on the reader's prior knowledge and ability to interpret abstract concepts. Students might struggle to connect these figurative expressions to their understanding of the text, making it more challenging for them to grasp the intended meaning and themes. This aspect of qualitative complexity calls for higher-level thinking and deeper comprehension, which can be particularly difficult for those who are not yet fully proficient in reading and interpreting texts rich in such language.

## 7. What are thematic units in reading instruction?

- A. Units focusing solely on vocabulary development
- B. Units that integrate multiple subjects around a central theme**
- C. Units that exclusively teach fiction
- D. Units with no connections to student interests

Thematic units in reading instruction are structured to integrate multiple subjects around a central theme, which allows students to make connections across different areas of learning. This approach fosters deeper understanding, as students explore a concept through various lenses such as literature, science, art, and social studies. By weaving together different subjects, thematic units encourage critical thinking and help to engage students, making learning more relevant and enjoyable. In contrast, a unit solely focusing on vocabulary development would limit the scope of learning and not provide the interdisciplinary context that thematic units do. Units that exclusively teach fiction would not incorporate the broad range of subjects that thematic units embrace. Additionally, units with no connections to student interests would lessen engagement and motivation, as thematic units are specifically designed to resonate with what students find meaningful and relatable. Thus, emphasizing multiple subjects around a central theme enriches the educational experience and promotes comprehensive learning.

## 8. Which vocabulary activity is suitable for preschool-aged children based on a story they heard?

- A. Creating their own storybook based on the narrative
- B. Having discussions about character motives
- C. Engaging in rhyme recognition with book vocabulary**
- D. Counting character appearances in the story

Engaging in rhyme recognition with book vocabulary is particularly suitable for preschool-aged children due to their developmental stage and the nature of early literacy skills. At this age, children are often captivated by sounds and rhythms in language, making rhymes an enjoyable way to introduce and reinforce vocabulary. Recognizing rhymes helps children develop phonemic awareness, a crucial skill for reading, as it enhances their ability to hear and identify the individual sounds in words. This activity allows preschoolers to connect new vocabulary with fun and memorable patterns, which can aid in retention and pronunciation. Additionally, engaging with rhymes fosters a love for language, as stories come alive through playful sounds, improving their overall literacy skills. This is especially beneficial in a group setting, where children can participate in shared reading and song activities that highlight the rhythmic elements of vocabulary, making learning both social and engaging. Other activities may also support vocabulary development but may not be as age-appropriate or engaging for preschoolers as rhyme recognition. For instance, creating a storybook may be too advanced for their developmental skills at this stage, while discussions about character motives may require higher-level thinking that preschoolers might not yet possess. Counting character appearances could be more fitting for numerical skills than for vocabulary enhancement. Thus, rhyme

**9. Which of the following is an effective strategy for supporting struggling readers?**

- A. Encouraging independent reading only**
- B. Using differentiated instruction and targeted interventions**
- C. Assigning larger reading assignments**
- D. Focusing solely on phonics**

Using differentiated instruction and targeted interventions is an effective strategy for supporting struggling readers because it accommodates the diverse needs of students. Every learner has unique challenges and strengths, and differentiated instruction allows the teacher to tailor their teaching methods and materials to match these individual needs. Targeted interventions, on the other hand, involve specific strategies designed to address particular reading difficulties a student might be facing, such as comprehension issues, fluency problems, or a lack of vocabulary. By focusing on these areas, teachers can provide personalized support that significantly enhances a student's ability to engage with reading. This approach not only helps students improve their reading skills but also boosts their confidence and motivation, as they receive the support necessary to progress at their own pace. In contrast, methods that involve merely encouraging independent reading, assigning larger assignments, or concentrating solely on phonics may not provide the comprehensive, individualized support that struggling readers require for success.

**10. Which extension activity would best support gifted and talented students in learning new vocabulary words?**

- A. Creating their own analogies for the vocabulary words**
- B. Conducting group discussions about the words**
- C. Writing sentences using the words**
- D. Drawing pictures representing the words**

Creating their own analogies for the vocabulary words is a highly effective extension activity for supporting gifted and talented students in their vocabulary development. This approach encourages higher-order thinking because it requires students to not only understand the meaning of the vocabulary words but also to connect them to concepts and ideas they are already familiar with. By crafting analogies, students engage in critical and creative thinking processes, allowing them to explore the nuances of word meanings and relationships in a deeper way. This method also fosters independence and imagination, as students can draw upon a wide range of experiences and knowledge to develop their analogies. It allows for individual expression and can lead to intriguing discussions as students share their analogies, thus enhancing their understanding of the vocabulary in an engaging context. Overall, this activity is not just about rote memorization of definitions; it promotes a more profound and contextual understanding of language, making it particularly suitable for gifted learners who thrive on challenging, intellectually stimulating tasks.