



#177-22

**Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #177-22**

DATE: August 12, 2022
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: Jillian Balow, Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Spring 2023 Field Test of New Item Type for the Standards of Learning
Reading Test**

In support of the focus on integrating reading and writing instruction to build student literacy skills, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is developing a new assessment item type for the grades 5, 8, and end-of-course (EOC) Standards of Learning (SOL) reading tests.

Introduced in a [presentation](#) to the Virginia Board of Education at its Work Session on March 16, 2022, the new item type asks students to write about what they have read in a nonfiction passage that may include history/social science- or science-based content. While reinforcing the importance of having students write about what they have read, this new integrated reading and writing item will also provide a measure of students' writing ability without requiring an additional test.

To prepare for the addition of this new item type in the grades 5, 8, and EOC SOL reading tests in spring 2024, a full scale, stand-alone field test will occur in spring 2023 to try out the items with students. The field test will occur from Monday, March 6, 2023, to Friday, April 28, 2023, with divisions having flexibility to determine their test window for the field test within the statewide window. All students who are scheduled to take the online grades 5, 8, and EOC SOL reading tests in spring 2023 will participate in the online field test. A read-aloud accommodation will be available for eligible students; however, paper, braille, and large print test forms will not be offered during the field test. Other accommodations usually used

when administering an online writing test (e.g., auditory aids, visual aids, etc.) that do not require a special test form are available for eligible students.

During the stand-alone field test, students will be presented with a nonfiction passage to read followed by four to six multiple-choice/technology-enhanced items to answer regarding the passage. Students will be presented with a writing prompt, or an “invitation to write,” that is based on the passage. Students will compose their response in the online test delivery software, completing their work in one session. Students taking the grade 8 and EOC SOL writing test in spring 2023 may be scheduled to participate in the field test for the new item type either before or after they complete their regularly scheduled spring 2023 SOL writing test.

For more information

Additional information about the upcoming field test will be provided to Division Directors of Testing as it becomes available. For questions regarding this information, please contact student assessment staff at Student_Assessment@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 225-2102.

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