

# North Carolina End-of-Grade Test of Reading Comprehension—Grade 6

*What are the purposes of the NC Testing Program?*

The North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests are required by General Statute 115C-174.10 as a component of the North Carolina Annual Testing Program. The purposes of North Carolina state-mandated tests are (i) to assure that all high school graduates possess those minimum skills and that knowledge thought necessary to function as a member of society, (ii) to provide a means of identifying strengths and weaknesses in the education process in order to improve instructional delivery, and (iii) to establish additional means for making the education system at the State, local, and school levels accountable to the public for results. This test is one component of the end-of-grade tests, which include reading comprehension and mathematics tests in grades three through eight. Students in grade three began taking a reading comprehension and mathematics pretest in the fall of 1996.

For school, school system, and state accountability, the scores from the end-of-grade tests at the prior grade are used to estimate a student’s level of knowledge and skills at the beginning of the new grade to determine the amount of growth during the school year (calculated from the difference between the two sets of test scores).

*What is measured by the test?*

The end-of-grade reading test for grade six assesses the reading components of the grade six North Carolina *Standard Course of Study*. The test consists of nine reading selections with three to nine associated questions for each selection. Each student is asked to read six literary selections (two fiction, one nonfiction, one drama, two poems) and three informational selections (two content and one consumer). The variety of selections on each form allows for the assessment of reading for various purposes: for literary experience, to gain information, and to perform a task.

The end-of-grade tests are organized by category, with each item falling into one of four categories: cognition, interpretation, critical stance, or connections. A description of each category and the average percentage of items per form for each category are shown in the table below. Each item is also aligned to a curriculum objective from the North Carolina English Language Arts *Standard Course of Study*.

Descriptive Information for the North Carolina End-of-Grade Test of Reading Comprehension—Grade 6

Category	Description of Category	Average Percentage
Cognition	Refers to the initial strategies a reader uses to understand the selection. It is about purpose and organization of the selection. It considers the text as a whole or in a broad perspective. Cognition includes strategies like using context clues to determine meaning or summarizing to include main points	29%
Interpretation	Requires the student to develop a more complete understanding. It may ask students to clarify, to explain the significance of, to extend, and/or to adapt ideas/concepts.	40%
Critical Stance	Refers to tasks that ask the student to stand apart from the selection and consider it objectively. It involves processes like comparing/contrasting and understanding the impact of literary elements.	25%
Connections	Refers to connecting knowledge from the selection with other information and experiences. It involves the student being able to relate the selection to events beyond/outside the selection. In addition, the student will make associations outside the selection and between selections.	6%

*How is the test administered?* The North Carolina End-of-Grade Test of Reading Comprehension at grade six consists of 56 multiple-choice questions administered during a 115-minute block within the last three weeks of school. Three equivalent forms are administered in each classroom to provide information for curriculum evaluation and planning. The tests are scanned and scored by the local education agency with software provided by the NCDPI. Reports of student performance are produced locally. In addition, test scores are aggregated at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to fulfill the state and federal reporting requirements for the accountability programs.

*How was the test developed?* The reading selections were chosen by North Carolina educators to reflect the variety of reading done by students at this level in and out of school and to ensure accessibility to a majority of students. Those chosen are selections that would generally be read by students, would be interesting to the students, and have appropriate content for a reading comprehension test at this grade level. The questions for each selection were written and reviewed by trained North Carolina teachers and educators during the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 school years and were field tested in the spring of 2002. Each field test question was administered to approximately 1,300 students from randomly selected schools across the state. The grade six reading test was implemented statewide for the first time in the spring of 2003.

*What kinds of scores do students receive on the test?* The scores on the end-of-grade reading test are reported on a developmental scale, which allows the measurement of growth in achievement across the grade levels. On the grade six reading test, the scale scores range from 228-283. The use of scale scores provides for easier and more consistent interpretations of the results from test to test. Achievement levels are also generated to provide an interpretation of student performance relative to a predetermined standard. Student scores are converted to one of the four achievement level categories shown below. In addition, student scores are reported as percentile ranks, which are generated from a statewide distribution of students who took the test during the first year the test was administered or the norming year.

Achievement Levels for the North Carolina End-of-Grade Test of Reading Comprehension—Grade 6

Level	Description	Scale Score Range
1	Students performing at this level do not have sufficient mastery of knowledge and skills in this subject area to be successful at the next grade level.	228-241
2	Students performing at this level demonstrate inconsistent mastery of knowledge and skills in this subject area and are minimally prepared to be successful at the next grade level.	242-251
3	Students performing at this level consistently demonstrate mastery of grade level subject matter and skills and are well prepared for the next grade level.	252-263
4	Students performing at this level consistently perform in a superior manner clearly beyond that required to be proficient at grade level work	264-283

*Sample Items* The following pages contain a sample selection and sample items that represent the type of material that appears on the North Carolina End-of-Grade Test of Reading Comprehension – Grade 6. The category and objective correspond to the category and curriculum objective that the item is designed to measure. The thinking skill corresponds to the level of thinking the item requires as defined by a thinking skills framework adapted from *Dimension of Thinking* by Robert J. Marzano and others. Additional samples can be found on the NCDPI web site at [www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/eog](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/eog).

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Read this poem to find out what the speaker learns about “The Other Side.” Then answer the questions that follow.

## The Other Side

by Angela Johnson

I used to stand on top of the shed in the back of my  
grandmama’s house and see the other side.  
The other side of where I was.  
The other side had tall buildings and I could buy  
hot dogs and pretzels on the street.  
At night the hum of the subway and faraway sirens  
would put me to sleep.  
I dreamed of the other side.  
I’d seen it on vacation and TV.  
The other side didn’t have a creek or magnolia trees  
and warm women who smelled like cookies hugging you  
on hot, sticky Sunday afternoons.

If I stood for a long time,  
the other side would fade and  
where I stood would light my world.

“The Other Side,” a poem from *The Other Side* by Angela Johnson. Copyright © 1998 by Angela Johnson. Reprinted by permission of Orchard Books, an imprint of Scholastic, Inc.

1. Which word **best** describes the emotion that the speaker describes at the beginning of the selection?

- A cheerfulness
- B forgiveness
- C greed
- D longing

2. In stanza 1, the speaker says, “I dreamed of the other side.” What does the speaker mean by *the other side*?

- A grandmama’s house
- B a neighbor’s house
- C life in the city
- D the beauty of the country

3. To which sense does the last line of stanza 1 appeal?

- A sight
- B smell
- C hearing
- D touch

4. In stanza 2, what does the speaker mean by saying that “the other side would fade”?

- A Clouds would roll in and hide the other side.
- B The speaker’s feelings about the other side would disappear.
- C The speaker’s feelings of loneliness would disappear.
- D Sunday afternoon soon would be over.

5. Based on the information in the selection, which of the following relationships is *most similar* to the relationship below?

the speaker’s side : other side

- A comforting : exciting
- B dangerous : boring
- C warm : cold
- D noisy : quiet

6. Which conclusion is *best* supported by the end of the selection?

- A The speaker was satisfied with his/her surroundings.
- B The speaker missed being with grandmama.
- C The speaker wanted to take a vacation.
- D The speaker preferred hot, sticky weather.

### End of Set

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*Answers to  
Grade 6 Reading Comprehension Sample Items*

<b>Passage Title</b>	<b>Question Number</b>	<b>Correct Answer</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Thinking Skill</b>	<b>Objective Number</b>
The Other Side	1	D	Interpretation	Integrating	5.01
The Other Side	2	C	Interpretation	Analyzing	5.01
The Other Side	3	D	Critical Stance	Organizing	5.01
The Other Side	4	B	Interpretation	Analyzing	5.01
The Other Side	5	A	Critical Stance	Analyzing	5.01
The Other Side	6	A	Interpretation	Integrating	4.02